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# EPISODES

IN

## CLERICAL AND PARISH LIFE

WITH OTHER

### Sketches on Church Subjects

CONTRIBUTORY TO

## CHRISTIAN UNITY.

BY

WILLIAM STAUNTON, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "ECCLESIASTICAL DICTIONARY," ETC.



NEW YORK

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE main object of the present work is to place in contrast several of the leading principles of the Anglo-Catholic or Anglo-American Church (commonly called "Protestant Episcopal"), with certain errors and misapprehensions very generally entertained concerning those principles. The advance of the Church in the United States and Territories, though rapid and full of promise, has been seriously retarded by obstructions arising from inherited prejudices, the unfavorable bias acquired under sectarian systems, and misconceptions of the Church's real origin and nature, and of the position which she occupies in regard to other religious bodies. Many of these popular errors have, unfortunately, found their way into the Church itself, and exercise more or less influence in determining the grade and force of pastoral teaching. They are removable only by a gradual acquisition of knowledge, and by that breadth and vigor of mind which are gained by breathing a Churchly atmosphere. Clerical life has thus a double aspect—the care of those born and bred within the fold of Christ, and the far

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harder task of giving form and symmetry to the minds of people daily flocking into the Church, but who, for lack of time, opportunity, or perhaps depth of interest, do not bring themselves into harmony with their Churchly surroundings.

In depicting, under various forms, the strifes naturally arising between adverse private opinion and the Church's teaching; and the struggles often occurring in parish life between the faithful pastor and the uninstructed layman, preference has been given in several cases to the *narrative* form, in order to add interest to the discussion of principles and objections by associating them with personal characteristics, and with the incidents and scenery of ordinary life. Some of these chapters, however, are based on actual *facts* known to the writer, and suggestive of the special course of thought with which they are clothed. A few other chapters are inserted to throw light on sundry questions concerning which erroneous opinions are widely prevalent.

Only one article ("The Priest and the Neophyte") has before appeared in print; and it is here given, in a rewritten form, to illustrate a popular mistake concerning "conversion."

NEW YORK, October 12, 1886.

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## CHAPTER I.

### AN INDEPENDENT THINKER.

WHILE standing on a dock by the side of the St. Lawrence River, on a bright summer day, I observed, not far off, an elderly man, whose downcast looks and abstracted air seemed quite out of harmony with the exciting scenery around. I soon recognized in him a fellow-townsman, who, like myself, was on a summer trip, when we thus accidentally came together. As he was not one of my parishioners, nor likely to become one so long as he was unfriendly to the Church, suspicious of the clergy, and by no means a model of temperance, I merely gave him a passing salutation as he drew nearer; for I knew by experience that this would be safer than an attempt at conversation, which would be very certain to end in a wrangle.

It turned out, however, that I was not to make good my escape on these easy terms. He had a fancy, as I soon discovered, for a tilt on the spot with a clergyman; and it is safe to say that, if self-confidence could carry him through, he was admirably fitted for the occasion. Without regard for cere-

mony or waste of words he then stepped in front of me, and let loose his notions about things religious in a speech after the following fashion : " Parson, I drop in at your church sometimes because I like to hear the music. As to the preaching, I don't think I am any the worse for it, which is a good deal to say in these times. But, after all, if there *is* another world (as you say) I think *I know as much about it as you do.*" It was a rough speech, to be sure, and not remarkable either for beauty or originality. But there was a touch of honesty about it which I was bound to respect ; for I knew that it exactly expressed its author's mind. And so I gave him the equally honest reply : " Possibly what you say is true. And possibly, also, you know *much more* about the other world than I do, if *your sources of information are better than mine.*" This turn of things he did not expect ; and as there was now nothing left to quarrel about, our exchange of ideas came to a very natural end, without much credit to its promoter or serious damage to myself.

I had long known this man, and it was not difficult to form a right estimate of one who valued his own opinions on religion at so high a rate that he gave expression to them on all occasions without the slightest reserve. His mind was naturally vigorous, and not wanting in clearness of discernment except on religious subjects. For want of early discipline and culture there was also a certain brusqueness or self-assertion in his manner, which proved

rather repellent than attractive, especially as it had led him into the habit of "speaking his mind" (as he called it) in bluff, unqualified, or sarcastic terms, which forbade any near approach to him in cool argument. I do not know how it came about, but so it was, that any reference to religious doctrine or principle seemed to provoke him and stir up his resentment, as if there lay concealed in every allusion to holy things some personal reflection which it was his duty to confront at once with becoming dignity. Whether it was conscience, or pride, or both together, or a sense of disgust at the popular methods of bringing men under religious influence without much regard for Christian ethics, which gave rise to this unfortunate irritability, it would not be easy to decide. It was an obstruction, at any rate, to all friendly intercourse with him on religious topics; and all the worse when it led him to believe that a clergyman could have no other interest in him than the gaining of a proselyte or the renting of a pew.

There was doubtless another and more secret reason for the bad temper of my old neighbor, the distrustful tone of his judgment, his censoriousness, his illimitable self-esteem, and the asperity with which he was accustomed to set forth his sentiments regarding the Christian faith. Perhaps it may not be unfair to surmise that at the root of all this there was something wrong and disquieting in the spiritual part of his nature—something far worse than any

fault of the mere intellect. A shadow was upon him which he had no power to remove, though it threatened to destroy all the light and joy of his life. The scepticism of an irreverent age had insensibly gained hold upon all the better part of his nature, obscuring his conscience, controlling his will, and playing sad work with his reason, judgment, and even his common-sense. An honest, truth-seeking doubter one can always respect, because we know that his difficulty is chiefly intellectual, and is open to correction. If he happens to be brought to a sudden halt before two diverging paths, we feel sure that he will hesitate only long enough to read his course from the guide-board, and will then proceed on the right path. But the confirmed sceptic would prefer to stumble along the other route—wrong though it may be—from mere opposition to established precedent. In so doing, however, he not only loses moral force, but becomes, so far, a slave to an ill-regulated liberty, and a blind worshipper of what he misnames “freedom.” It is easy, therefore, to see which way human nature will be likely to lean, when a choice is to be made between the claims of Divine Truth and the charms of what is supposed to be *free thought*, however much such thought may be cramped with fetters.

For, what is called “free thought” has so often betrayed itself by an overbearing and hostile *pre-judgment* of the very subjects which it had promised to investigate impartially, that its conclusions—even

for this reason alone—can have no logical or doctrinal value whatever. The very terms, “ free thought ” and “ free inquiry,” have become, in ordinary usage, untruthful in their application, and misleading. They no longer describe that mental process which seeks truth alone at all risks, and admits no foregone conclusions to affect its verdict. The unbeliever would do well to remember that free inquiry, properly so called, is as old as the New Testament, with this distinction, however, that, under our Lord and His Apostles, it was serious and conservative, accepting all established facts, and reasoning with those facts in view ; while in modern times free inquiry has become irreverent, querulous, destructive, and averse to the binding power of all sacred facts and principles. Our Lord Himself encouraged such freedom of thought as deserves the name, and even censured those who would not ‘of their own selves judge what was right.’ The Church also has, from the beginning, promoted free inquiry as legitimate and healthful, when guarded against perversion, and kept strictly within its own appropriate sphere. No one can read the ancient Apologists and Fathers, the history of the first four Ecumenical Councils, and the marvellous results of deep and penetrating thought displayed in the writings of the Churchmen of later times, without admiration of the grand achievements of this spirit of inquiry in the development, illustration, and defence of inspired truth. On this point a late writer

## 6      *Episodes in Clerical and Parish Life.*

remarks : “Where will be found a succession of nobler intellects, of profounder thinkers, of more learned scholars, of more elevated moralists, of more subtle philosophers, or more successful toilers after truth, than within the pale of the Church of Christ ? Freedom of thought, largeness of affection, nobility of character, and political freedom, have all been nursed beneath the shadow of dogma. . . . So long as the Church has been faithful to her trust, and has taught no dogmas but what are contained in, or may be proved by, Holy Writ, she has ever proved herself the nursing-mother of free inquiry, religious liberty, and an ever-advancing civilization.”\*

But these triumphs of free thought could never have been won, had not the activity and fervor of such thought been confined within the boundaries of *its own proper province*, instead of wasting its energy amid the fogs of conjecture and wild speculation. It is not absurd or unscientific to say that freedom must recognize and observe certain limitations ; for beyond these limits it degenerates into mere lawlessness, and ends too often in both moral and mental paralysis. Some light may be thrown on this by a simple glance at what we may every day see in the physical world. Nothing, for instance, seems more perfectly unrestricted than the freedom of a bird, as it traverses in all directions the

\* “The Dogmatic Faith, by Rev. E. Garrett, M.A.,”  
p. 24.

lower regions of the atmosphere. But there are higher regions, inaccessible to the strongest wing—regions where the inevitable death-chill threatens even the soaring ambition of the eagle. Our own natural powers and faculties also have limits ; and beyond or above those limits they cannot operate, unless by an accession of force from some external agency, *i.e.*, from instruments, mechanical powers, supernatural aid, or Divine interference. The eye, by its native power, cannot discern the satellites of Saturn or the phases of Venus. The hand cannot raise a ponderous mass without aid from a source independent of itself. In like manner the human mind, however acute by nature and vigorous by dint of cultivation and exercise, is sure to find out at last the limit of its ability. It is not all-comprehensive, nor able to discover and grasp by its own powers that class of truths which relate to the invisible world, the purposes of God, the destiny of man, the origin of sin, the mystery of redemption, and the grave realities of a future life. Free inquiry concerning revealed truths is bounded and restricted by the *measure of the inquirer's ability*. This ability may be great or small; but it can never rise above its own level, or dominate over truths which it had not even the power to discover. Man's wit, at the best, is no competent judge of Almighty wisdom. If human reason makes unnumbered mistakes—as it does—within its own realm, we may anticipate still worse mishaps and

failures when it ventures to deal with the deep things of God.\*

The grand error of modern free-thinkers lies in their oversight or denial of this simple fact. That there are truths of some sort which the limited reason of man is incompetent to discover and set forth, has been the belief of men in every age of the world. It is an opinion in which Jew and Christian, Mohammedan and heathen, coincide. And if, in the great universe around us, and in the designs of God, relative to the human race, any such truths exist which it is important to our happiness to know, revelation not only becomes a necessity, but from its very nature a law which demands our belief, because it is nothing less than a voice from heaven. The primary and only real questions, then, to which the honest doubter should apply himself at the outset, are these, viz.: Whether a revelation has been made, and whether that revelation was confided to "the holy Catholic Church," and has been safely transmitted through that Church to our own times. Let

\* "The subjects belonging to religion lie in their very nature beyond the reach of possible human discovery. In regard to the nature of God and His purposes toward mankind, the human reason has no data for argument. The thoughts of God can, in the nature of things, be known to God alone. The wildest fanaticism has never claimed the power of discovering by intuition the thoughts of man; and its incapacity to discover the thoughts of God must be as much greater as, on the theory of Theism, Deity transcends humanity."—("The Dogmatic Faith," p. 108.)

him approach these questions with the reverential spirit, the purity of motive, and the resolute love of truth which distinguished the Christians of the primitive age, and the result will be the removal of "all scruple and doubtfulness" concerning the one true faith, and the Church, which is its "Keeper and Witness."

## CHAPTER II.

“ LIKE NOAH’S WEARY DOVE.”

THE “elderly man” of liberal sentiments, with whom we had an interview in the foregoing chapter, did not call himself a “Christian.” And therein he was greatly to be commended, because he showed that he still retained his respect for truth. Nevertheless, if someone had said to him, “Sir, you are no Christian,” or, “Sir, your conduct is not that of a Christian man,” he would have felt aggrieved and undervalued. And here again he is to be commended, for thus bearing unconscious witness to the purity and loftiness of Christian morality. Though he was not himself a Christian, yet he knew very well what a Christian *ought to be*; and this “ought to be” was nothing less than an ideal picture of Christian saintliness, photographed on his mind by that Light “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” From this I conclude that the resentment of our elderly free-thinker, on being stripped of all Christian *prestige* and ornament, is not the least among the “Evidences of Christianity.”

There is another and far more hopeful class of

men to whom we will now turn—a class probably more numerous than we know—who are not infected and worried with sceptical notions, but are simply baffled in their honest efforts to reconcile the apparent anomalies of visible Christianity with the all-perfect delineation of the saintly life as found on the page of Scripture. Many of these victims of doubt are really “not far from the kingdom of God,” and deserve sympathy more than indifference or reproach. Their trouble is not attributable to a wrong bias of the will, the heart, or the conscience; but springs mainly from an antagonism between these elements of their nature and the persistent clamor of a capricious and undisciplined *intellect*. No one but the great Searcher of Hearts can take measure of their perplexities, or fathom the depth of their secret griefs. And the only wonder is that they should so much resemble those travellers on a broad prairie, who, having missed their way, stand gazing around for some beaten track to lead them out of the dreary solitude, while, close by, but unrecognized, runs the well-marked highway, with its finger-board bearing the gladdening words, “*This is the way; walk ye in it.*”

In writing these lines, I have had in view a very worthy neighbor of mine, whose outward respect for things sacred was not to be doubted; but it was so mingled with indecision and shyness in religious converse, that no one could exactly define his position. He went to church, without being a Church-

man; thought well of John Wesley, but disliked the Methodists; had a good word for the Presbyterians, but abhorred the Westminster Confession; and would even have favored the Romanists, had they possessed (like the Anglo-Catholic Church) an unadulterated and unalterable Creed. And so, as time went on, public opinion ranked him alternately with believers and unbelievers, and finally settled down quietly by assigning him a conspicuous place in the school of *Doubters*.

Meeting him one day as I was strolling in our pleasant park, we sat down together in the shade, and talked for a while on generalities, as people commonly do, when the only use they can make of speech is to drive off, or relieve, the dreariness of silence. I had no reason to think that my companion's reserve, which had chilled all the gossips of his acquaintance, would melt away in the presence of a clergyman. The chances were all on the contrary side. So, at least, I judged. But I was mistaken; for, to my great surprise, some chance but timely word of mine unloosed the tongue of my reticent friend, and set in motion a torrent of pent-up thoughts; for which thoughts—as was now quite apparent—I might long ago have opened an outlet, had I only made the venture. This sudden unveiling of a mind which had long been seeking truth by delusive tests and methods, was to me an unspeakable relief. No mariner out at sea ever felt more jubilant on the lifting of a fog, or the return of sun-

shine ; for my course was now quite clear. I knew enough about spiritual navigation to point out the rocks and shoals, among which the faith of my neighbor was in hourly danger of shipwreck ; and as things stood, I thought that my services as a pilot might not be untimely or useless. The reader, however, must not expect that I can here set down, word for word, all that was said by my friend, or interjected by myself, as we sat together, not very unlike a priest and his penitent in an open-air confessional. I can only trace in outline, or by fragmentary sketches, that special bias, obliquity, or one-sidedness which so marked the current of this doubter's thoughts as to expose him to the drift of "every wind of doctrine," and deprive him effectually of the peace and "confidence of a certain faith."

A man must be very far gone in doubt to say, as my friend did, "*I would believe if I could.* But I cannot *create* faith by the mere force of my own will. I cannot reconcile contradictions ; nor can I trace the straight line of truth through all the twists and entanglements in which the religious world bids me seek it." Speeches of this kind are, at any rate, of some service ; for they are such pictures of a man's own soul as we cannot otherwise obtain, and are likely to be accurate, because they are painted and exhibited by the man himself. It took not long, after this disclosure, to discover the real source of my friend's trouble. He had been for some years

a reader, but not a very critical or close student, of the Holy Scriptures. In those Scriptures he read, in the words of Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, and in the sayings of our Lord Himself, the most glowing and vivid descriptions of *the Christian Church*; its majesty, as a great empire of saints; its all-embracing dominion, from pole to pole, and from the rising to the setting sun; its unity, as one vast kingdom, affording shelter and protection to all other kingdoms; its comprehensiveness, gathering into blessed fraternity all races and conditions of men, rich and poor, wise and unwise; its glory, as a kingdom of righteousness and peace; its triumphant march, "as an army with banners;" its supernatural powers, in the presence and might of the Holy Ghost; and the sway of its resistless arms under the commanding sceptre of "the King of kings and Lord of lords."

All this our friend had gathered, text by text, out of his Bible. And when the labor of many months was thus finished, he took no further counsel of prudence, logic, or common-sense, but sprang at once to the conclusion that he had now before him *the whole testimony of God concerning the nature and destiny of the Christian Church*; and then, with equal haste and assurance he inferred that this testimony of God could have no other visible and legitimate counterpart or object than that part of the human race which is commonly known as "*the religious world*."

Closing his Bible he took up a hymn-book, and after reading—

"Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem rise ;  
Exalt thy tow'ring head, and lift thine eyes,"

he went out into the great "religious world" to see, in real and substantial form, that Church of which such "glorious things are spoken."

And what did he there find to illustrate and confirm what he had read, and was now waiting to realize? Instead of resemblance to the testimony, he saw unlikeness; instead of agreement, he saw antagonism. He found discord where he had prepared his ear for transporting harmony; and the din of conflicting voices where the Book had spoken of unity, peace, and concord. But for such sights and sounds he was not prepared; and, distrusting himself, he inquired of those around him where, in this confusion of things, he should look for *that Church* which, long ago, was founded on the Rock of Ages, and against which even the gates of hell should never prevail. And as his eye wandered restlessly around, some one pointed out to him a venerable organization which, he said, was older than the most renowned of earthly kingdoms, but still vigorous, stately, full of might, and strangely attractive, though bearing the scars and tokens of many a conflict with foes and traitors in its eventful progress along the track of eighteen centuries. And

while the doubter was gazing at this wondrous sight, he saw also, not far off from it, large groups or bodies of people, who, in days of strife and clamor (as he afterward learned) had forsaken this illustrious homestead of their fathers, and formed for themselves a number of independent commonwealths or fraternities outside.

Others told him that neither this old and majestic organization, nor those groups of Christian people which he had seen around it, were really the *true* and scriptural Church of Christ ; but that the Church of which Apostles and Evangelists had written was an *invisible* body, far transcending all earthly churches, sects, parties, or communities, and comprising only the holy, pure, and faithful of all lands and ages, whose names “are written in the book of life.”

And still others told him that his investigations resembled those of a simple novice, ignorant of the new and progressive theology, and unenlightened by all that science and the “higher criticism” had revealed. For, though in older times the Church was really a magnificent spectacle, when the shades of literary darkness and the terrors of superstition held the nations in awe and abject servility, yet, under the sunbeams of modern intelligence, the Church was in a gradual process of disintegration, and was doomed to leave only its foundations and ruined walls for the researches of the antiquarian and the curiosity of the historian.

The enthusiasm of my friend was already beginning to wane. But he was not yet discouraged. A closer inspection might be made. He lived in a populous city, with much "religious world" in it. To the manifestations of this he now applied himself. There were in the city more than a hundred houses of prayer, great and small, noble and ignoble. The doors of a few stood open every day, inviting the "children of the kingdom" and the crowd of passers-by to enter in and worship the Lord their Maker. The others, many in number, were barred against the penitent souls seeking refreshment and peace, except on Sundays, and at some intervening hours on weekly evenings. Many of these edifices had become specially sacred by an act of solemn consecration to the service of the Triune God. Many others were simply "dedicated" for religious uses, with an implied reservation for less sacred purposes. In some of these temples of God, divine worship was celebrated with all the impressiveness of the ancient ritual; the Creeds of Christendom were reasserted by the uplifted voices of choir and people; and the altars of God were encompassed by faithful souls seeking "the Bread of life." In others, the inspiration of a glowing ritual was wanting; the pulpit or platform dominated the altar; the Churchly choir was supplanted by the frivolous quartette; heaven's high praises were sung by the indevout, and Eucharistic hymns by the unbaptized and godless. It was also observable that, while

some of these temples gave welcome and freedom to "all sorts and conditions of men," there were many others gorgeously enriched for the comfort of the sons of affluence, but having no desirable place for Lazarus and his friends, should they chance to return from Abraham's bosom. All these discoveries were made by my distracted friend as he roamed about in the streets and avenues of the great city. Weary and sad, he looked no farther, but sought relief in other scenes.

He entered into a country village, told no man his errand, but waited, like Zaccheus in the tree, to learn, if he could, whether Christ and His loving disciples were near at hand. In the charming serenity of this outlying corner of "the religious world" he might surely find (as he hoped) the Church of the Bible, attractive and lovely with all the adornments of rural piety. He looked abroad in this abode of a thousand or twelve hundred souls, and saw the towers, the spires, and the weather-cocks, of five or six wooden structures, supposed to be palaces for the Lord, the universal King. In each of these, the people were taught a different Gospel—so different that the law of spiritual *cohesion* among the people, had yielded—though Divine—to a more energetic law of *repulsion*, which was "earthly, sensual, and," at the least, human. In none of these houses had an altar been erected on which to celebrate and offer up before the Divine Majesty, in holy Mysteries, the memorial of the great Sacrifice

once made for the sins of the world. In none of them resounded the glorious liturgies of the faithful, or the manly proclamation of the one true Faith, or the warnings of God and His Apostles against the sin and the peril of "false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Wondering at all this, my friend was simple enough to ask one of the hard-working but ill-paid "ministers," why it was that all those people, who believed in Christ, and no doubt meant to do right, had been so unwise as to burden themselves with the cost and care of so many separate houses for the perpetuation of their strifes and divisions, instead of rearing up one noble and spacious edifice, which, for ages to come, would be the crowning glory of their village, and where they might all come together to worship their God and Saviour, not with souls torn and racked by emulations and jealousies, but in joyous consciousness of being one body in Christ, compacted together, and holding the mystery of the faith "in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life?"

The inquirer now began to ruminate seriously on what he had seen, and try to find an escape from the labyrinth of his perplexing thoughts. Of one thing he still remained perfectly sure—that the Bible, and all things written in it, were and must be infallibly true. But the evidence of his eyes and ears had made him nearly *as* sure that the so-called "religious" community, torn asunder by relentless faction, and stained with all the hues of a parti-col-

ored Christianity, *could not* be that one holy Church "which prophets and kings desired to see," the city of God, the earthly type and figure of the Jerusalem above.

And so, at last, there came upon him an agony of bewilderment, and he was tempted to ask himself whether, after all, the Bible might not be simply a provision for the cultivation of the spiritual life in men *as individuals*, or unassociated in any organized body? whether the Gospel was not purely a revelation of light and life for *every man's own personal guidance*, and needing, therefore, no external aids in the form of Churches, clergymen, Sacraments, rites, and modes of worship—these being, presumably, mere human inventions, inimical rather than helpful to "the life of God in the soul of man?"

This temptation, however, passed away with the transient eclipse of his better judgment. For he knew, and still believed, that the Son of God had established on earth a *great, visible, and imperishable Kingdom or Church*, with power and authority to rule, with a positive faith to be everywhere taught, with a Ministry to guide, and Sacraments to bless. This vast outstanding FACT could not be gainsaid. It came as a direct obstruction to any theory of a purely *spiritual* religion, or an *invisible* Church, or a Church as only an intangible conception or dreamy idea. It meant a *living, organized body*—the very body of Christ, and as such it was a veritable and necessary part of the *Gospel itself*. But how to

make this great fact consistent with the outward phenomena of Christianity, this honest but superficial thinker knew not. And so it was that he came to the sorrowful conclusion already mentioned, that though he *would* believe, yet he *could* not.

It was my turn now to speak, and I told my friend (with some warmth, I confess) that his confession, assertion, conclusion, or regret—whichever it might be called—was grounded on two or three of the most strange and inexcusable mistakes that he had probably ever made since the days of his infancy. What was it, indeed, that he *wanted* to believe, and *could* not? It was something which *neither God nor the Bible had ever required him to believe*; something which he had neither the *power* nor the *right* to believe; something which, after his long survey of *facts*, he was bound to abandon as a mere illusion. And what was that illusion? He had been trying to reconcile two things, which, in their very nature, are irreconcilable—trying to identify the “One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church” of God with that strange creation of modern times, “*the religious world*.” Already, in the course of his survey of things, some one had pointed out to him this venerable Church, the visible kingdom of Christ, an organization different from all others, and peerless in its grandeur and gifts. In contrast with this he had seen a multitude of competing sects, all claiming the Christian name, but disunited, self-originated, unhistorical, each bearing

its own banner, with no alliance of mutual affection ; no unity of worship ; no type, foreshadowing, or prophetic symbol in Holy Scripture, and bearing witness to Christian truth *only* so far as that truth accorded with human predilections and theories. To identify these two things would doubtless baffle the intellect of an angel ; and no wonder that it led our visionary inquirer to the borders of unbelief.

But (as we have said) our doubting friend had made still other mistakes. For, even if he *had* recognized the one holy Church in the midst of the dire confusion around it, yet he erred in supposing that the Church, in its present state, must be *free from fault* or imperfection, and so brilliant with the holiness of all its members as to seem like a grand illuminating body, resplendent and conspicuous amid the darkness of the world. Here, again, his Bible would have taught him better, had he read it more patiently. His search had been, not for “the Church *militant*,” but for the “Church *triumphant* ;” and therefore his ideal of it was far above the sphere of earthly things. He desired to see a Church on earth more glorious in purity than ever was known or probably dreamed of by Apostle, Evangelist, Saint, or Martyr. And because his ideal Church was thus more perfect than any institution he could find on earth, therefore *he doubted*. And, strangest of all, he doubted when the facts before him should rather have *confirmed his faith*. For what were those

facts but most unanswerable proofs that the Church of Christ is—and always has been—what the Lord Himself and the inspired writers said it *would be*? Were we not told that there would be good and bad fish in the net, tares in the field, dead branches in the vine, trees with more leaves than fruit, rich soil and barren rock, selfish laborers in the vineyard, wise and foolish virgins, talents improved and talents buried, unprofitable servants, false brethren, saints and hypocrites, and every variety of grade even among the best and purest? Precisely this is what we see in the existing Church, and what we may read of even in the Church under Apostolic oversight. And yet, amid all her troubles, disorders, corruptions, sins, and failings, the Church, unlike "the religious world" around, still holds fast the faith "once delivered" to her, the true ministerial succession, the divinely instituted Sacraments, and that continuity of existence which mark her out as the very "kingdom" to which God's promises were made, and in which the Lord Himself will abide, "always, even unto the end of the world." From all which the inference is plain, that our doubter was not as familiar with his Bible as he ought to have been; and for this reason he came to a premature and most unwise conclusion in supposing that the facts before him were irreconcilable with a hearty faith.

And there was yet another point which he overlooked, viz.: that the power and worth of Christi-

anity cannot fairly be estimated by a mere glance at its influence on the faith and piety of *any given period*, or *any one generation*. A test of this kind is little less than absurd when applied to a system full of Divine wisdom, and framed expressly for the benefit of the whole human race. Christianity is, in truth, the vast motive power which, for eighteen centuries, has been gradually but irresistibly elevating the moral tone of the world, slowly working out a new and ever-advancing civilization, and bringing men nearer and nearer to that perfection for which they would otherwise aspire in vain. The “Gospel of the kingdom” has already done a mightier work in this direction than all other agencies combined. It is a simple fact which anyone can verify, that Christian nations rule the world, and show themselves superior to all others in power, intelligence, science, morality, and all other elements of greatness. It is evident to the commonest reason that there *is* something in Christianity—call it what we will—which lifts man from the dust, and calls forth and exalts all the capabilities of his better nature. For what has made this difference between the nations which now stand at the head of the ruling powers on the globe, and those other nations and empires which it is so easy to bring to a consciousness of their own weakness when they are put into competition with *Christian* powers? Difference of blood will not account for it; nor will difference of climate, nor different habits of life and

social economy. For we may select any body of heathen people, and imbue them with the principles of the Gospel, and—without *any change of blood or climate*—they will reach, in one century, or less, a point of elevation in virtue and goodness which they would not otherwise attain though their dynasty should last to the world's end. And it is not too much to say that the civilized world would never have reached its present lofty standard of development, its high conceptions of moral science and obligation, its grand ideas of God, of the universe, of human nature and human destiny, and of social duty and happiness, but for the direction given to human thought by the light of revelation and by the stirring energy of Christian principle and the Christian Creed. But still the Church on earth never was, and probably never will be, an institution of which every particular member shall be found holy, without fault, and resplendent with spiritual life. If the doubter looks for perfection, he will rarely find it in this present world. The Church may be well likened to a vast hospital, into which are gathered the spiritually sick and helpless, that they may be healed by the Great Physician. In such a hospital we shall find weakness and infirmity, disease not yet removed, injuries not yet repaired, and palsied limbs not yet restored. And no one should expect to find there the glow of health on every countenance, and all the inmates rejoicing in the strength of vigorous manhood.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHURCH BY "PREFERENCE."

PASSING along the street on one of my leisure evenings, I observed a number of people entering a large and well-lighted Hall, at the door of which was a placard or printed notice, in very bold letters, from which I learned that a Conference on *Christian Unity* would be held on that evening, and that everybody was cordially invited to attend. I went in, accordingly, and heard several glowing speeches, all of which, however, went round about the subject named, without ever touching it in any practical way; and I returned home with the impression that the unity so much longed-for, amounted only to a cessation of hostilities under a flag of truce. One of the most fluent and energetic of the speakers very happily and concisely expressed what appeared to be the sense of the meeting, in words which I wrote down at once on a card; and I intend to use them as a text for the present chapter. The words came in at the close of a very animated oration, and were precisely these:—"In my opinion, if a man has experienced religion, it matters little whether he belongs to the Episcopal Church, or to

some other orthodox denomination. It is simply a matter of *preference.*"

The speaker was honest enough to call this his *opinion*; and it will be a great relief to any reverent mind to know that it was nothing more. Nevertheless, the vigorous and positive air of the utterance, emphasized as it was by both voice and gesture, seemed to indicate that the speaker regarded it as a most important verity, which ought to receive, without debate, the assent of every rational soul. People are apt to deliver their opinions in forcible terms, especially when declaiming on *religious* topics, which they have had neither the patience to investigate, nor the wit to comprehend. In this case, the orator was a layman; and was evidently not aware that his assertion was not only a curious example of indiscrimination, but also a trespass on the region of the Faith. While *opinion* has, in the Church, a wide field in which to take free exercise, it may, and often does, overleap its proper boundaries, and claim the right of expatiating on subjects entirely out of its own province,—even on the prime articles of the Christian Faith, and the deepest mysteries of the kingdom of God. In the speech referred to, we have, (as I have just said,) an instance of this encroachment of opinion on the domain of *Faith* ;\* and it may be well to take some further notice of so grave an error, and point out its natural issues.

\* See Chapter X.

When a man says that it is a matter of indifference whether he belongs to a religious sect, or to one of the great national branches of the holy Catholic Church, it is clear that the *worth* of such a judgment depends on the qualifications of the person who expresses it. An opinion is not in itself a *fact*, principle, or independent subsistence, but simply the judgment which one or another man happens to form on matters not admitting of demonstration, or of proof by conclusive evidence. That judgment is exactly parallel with the *ability of its author*. It is a popular saying that "one man's opinion is as good as another's." But it is not true. No one really believes it, when brought to a practical test, except in things which are confessedly beyond the reach of the human understanding, or the powers of reason. No one believes that wisdom and ignorance are twin-born, and of equal authority. The decision of a learned jurist on some point of law, or that of an experienced soldier on a doubtful strategic movement, or that of an accomplished surgeon in a debate about an amputation, would be of far higher value than the judgment of any number of men who were unacquainted with law, military science, or the resources of surgical skill. "What would be thought," says Mr. Ffoulkes, "of the scholarship of that man who professed to lecture on the speeches in Thucydides, the choruses of Æschylus and Euripides, the satires of Persius, or the annals of Tacitus, while betraying every now and

then his inability to construe and parse plain easy sentences in Latin and Greek *Delectus?*" ("*Christendom's Divisions*," I., vii.)

In like manner, the opinion on which we are commenting, being on a momentous religious question, must be estimated just according to the degree in which its speaker had qualified himself to take a fair, reverent, and discriminating view of the grounds on which such an opinion rests. We do not know precisely what those qualifications were. But of one thing there can be no doubt, viz., that the opinion was quite in harmony with "the spirit of the age," and with the vagueness and utter crudity of prevalent notions concerning the Church of Christ. The case before us amounts simply to this: it is alleged that a man who has "experienced religion" is free (or at least not forbidden by that religion,) to choose between two things, one of which the speaker calls "the Episcopal Church," and the other an "orthodox denomination." And as it is also said that a simple "preference" is all that is required for a selection, it follows that these two things are assumed to be *equal*, or nearly so, in those qualities which constitute their value. The "Church" and the "denomination" are thus placed substantially on the same level, and it "makes little difference" (as the speaker said,) which is selected.\*

\* "It is but little to the purpose to say that, with all their differences, 'all the denominations agree' in fundamentals. This is not true, for there is not a single article of the Creed,

Now it is not unreasonable to say, that an assertion which covers so much ground, ought to be sustained by such a body of evidence as will justify and fully account for its apparent boldness. It will therefore be worth while to enquire whether any such evidence can be found.

The first of the two things named is “the Episcopal Church;” which title (we may remark, in passing,) conveys no adequate idea of the body referred to.\* What then, in reality, *is* that body? Everyone knows that there are some things about it which look *peculiar*, to say the least; and those peculiarities may possibly help to a solution of the question. Nothing is more obvious to the whole community than the fact, that the Church here spoken of, regards herself as a body wholly distinct from the

not one point of faith, upon which Christians, so-called, existing at the present moment as detached and separate bodies, do not differ; there is not,—it would not be too much to say,—one single text of Scripture, saving, of course, mere historical narrative, upon the interpretation of which all parties, or all ‘Churches,’ would or could agree.” (*English Churchman.*)

\* A true branch of the Church of Christ cannot be otherwise than “Episcopal.” From the Apostles’ days down to the present hour, in all lands and places where that Church exists, or has existed, she has been ruled and led along her shining path by Bishops. A Church without a Bishop was unheard of in all the length and breadth of Christendom for 1500 years. The invention of a *non-Episcopal* Church is to be ascribed to Protestantism.

Protestant "denominations" around her, and is also regarded as a distinct and exclusive body by those denominations themselves. In her formularies there is no recognition of those religious communities as "sister churches," or as sharers in an Apostolic lineage, or as in possession of a Divinely-commissioned priesthood, or as qualified to minister to the people a valid Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, or as having any historical proof and record of organic unity with the Apostolic Church,—holy and Catholic,—of which we read in the Bible and the Creeds. This Church thus stands in the bold distinctness of an unique and well-defined body, conscious of the possession of certain essential properties which are *not found in the Protestant sects.* This strongly-marked distinction between the Church and other religious bodies, is not similar to that by which one "denomination" is distinguished from another, but springs from a far deeper source, and may, therefore, need some explanation.

We read in holy Scripture that the Incarnate Son of God founded a CHURCH, and only *one* Church. It was a visible body, differing essentially from all other bodies, and yet resembling them in some of its external aspects. It is called by several names, and described under various similitudes, but all of them denoting one and the same great, Divinely-ordered, and permanent organization. That organization was visible to all eyes,—as visible as any earthly empire, state, or monarchy. Its Head and Sovereign, its

chief rulers, its subordinate officers, and its subjects, were everywhere recognized, and its laws, principles, and discipline, were publicly proclaimed, and were known to all men; whether friends or foes. It is not merely likened to a kingdom, but repeatedly declared to *be* one,\* and is called the "kingdom of heaven," the "kingdom of God," the "kingdom of Christ," or simply "*the* kingdom." To prepare the way for this kingdom or Church of the Redeemer, S. John the Baptist went out preaching and baptizing, on the very ground that "*the kingdom of heaven [was] at hand.*" When our Lord also began to preach, His words and appeal were the same as those of His fore-runner; and through all His ministry on earth our Lord went about declaring the nature and destiny of this "kingdom,"—the coming Church,—unfolding its doctrines, illustrating its pure morality, prefiguring its Sacraments, foretelling its glory, and initiating its Apostles into a knowledge of its mysteries. And thus the King openly proclaimed His *kingdom*, as the Divinely-instituted refuge for all who were to be redeemed by His blood, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and made heirs of immortality. This kingdom of Christ, so fully described in the "Acts of the Apostles," and in several of their Epistles, rapidly spread through all the

\* "It is evident at a glance that the prominent purpose of Christ when He was upon earth, was the establishment of a kingdom here." (*Bishop T. M. Clark, D.D. Quoted in American Church Review, Oct., 1876, p. 485.*)

then known world. Its standard was uplifted in every nation by the Apostles and their successors. And in that same early age, when Apostolic men were still living, the missionaries of the cross reached the shores of Britain, and there planted, deep in the soil, that living branch of the Catholic Church which, after a growth and development of seventeen centuries, is now—with its vigorous off-shoot in America,—a bright centre of light, spiritual life, and future promise, to all who are looking for a kingdom which cannot be moved.

All this is written, because our orator,—for want of elementary instruction,—has ranked the so-called “Episcopal Church” among the modern *denominations*,—overlooking altogether the important fact, that the Anglican Church, (the venerable Mother of the American Church,) was *fourteen or fifteen centuries old before the Protestant sects came into existence*. It might also have been remembered that the prominent English-speaking denominations or sects had their rise in *secessions* from the Catholic Church of England. And those secessions were rashly made, either on merely local, semi-political, polemical, and metaphysical grounds, which have long ago ceased to be operative; or, under a blind and indiscriminating onset against error, in which the gold and the dross perished alike in the general ruin. It is now very generally acknowledged, since better light has dawned on the minds of the separatists, that the original grounds of this great *schism* were ill-considered, in

many points quite frivolous, and in all respects untenable, in view of the grievous losses thus entailed on future generations.\*

We are now in a position to see what those two things *really are*, which are declared in our text to be so nearly alike that the choice of one or the other is a mere “matter of preference.” The first of these things is a true branch of the “one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church,” the visible and Divinely-organized kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The other is a modern “denomination,” consisting originally of separatists from that visible Church or kingdom, who, without any Apostolic authority, or warrant of holy Scripture, formed themselves into an independent association, self-governed, and the sole judge of its own doctrine, ministry, worship, and discipline. Now if there is no *essential difference* between these two things, we are bound either to deny the Divine origin and authority of the “Church,” and thus reduce it to the level of the “denominations;” or else, to ascribe that origin and authority to the denomination, and thus elevate it to the level of the Church of Christ. But as the case stands,

\* The sense of this loss of Churchly character and *prestige*, is acutely felt in sectarian bodies, and accounts very naturally for the efforts made in late years to redeem that loss by the re-instatement of architectural, liturgical, musical, artistic, and æsthetic features, in their church-like edifices, modes of worship, and observance of customs and usages, most of which their forefathers would have denounced as Popish and Anti-christian.

the difference is really world-wide, certain as God's word, and insurmountable.

If our orator had thought of this, his appeal would most likely have lost its most startling paragraph ; and his hearers would not have been led to wonder how such words as these following ever crept into the Church's Litany :—“From all false doctrine, *heresy*, and *schism*, Good Lord, deliver us.”

There are people in the world who do not readily discern differences in things that are *various* ; but see them distinctly in things that are *identical*. With those people, the Nicene Creed and the Saybrook platform are simply two sectarian Confessions of Faith. In their judgment, it is superstitious to pay honor to a Church relic, but not superstitious to pay the same honor to a piece of Plymouth Rock. There is no end to this confusion of ideas, when men abandon even their common-sense, and follow “the devices and desires of their own hearts.” An unbeliever sees no difference between freedom of thought, and a denial of God and holy writ. The Communist sees no difference between theft, and the appropriation to himself of other people's property. The Socialist sees no difference between the reign of liberty, and the horrors of anarchy. The old Puritans saw no difference between the reverent service of God, and the destruction, ruin, and pillage of His sacred altars and temples. And there are many others who see no difference between the infallible word of God, and their own private and fallible spec-

ulations. The Christians of New Testament times were taught to discriminate. And one of their first lessons in this department was, to "mark them that cause offences," and who, in so doing, prepare the way for the entrance of schism. The Apostles knew that unity could not be broken, without the destruction of that charity, which is greater and more God-like than either faith or hope. Hence, their Epistles abound with cautions against the first approaches to disunion ; and the spirit of *schism* is denounced as if it were the plague and blood-poison of the "body of Christ."

Returning to our text, it may be observed that, if the Church and the sects were *really* on an equality, no one would need to be very scrupulous about points of disagreement, either in doctrine or usage ; and the transition from one to another of those bodies, (from the Church to a sect, for instance,) would touch no vital principle, but be chiefly, as the orator said, "a matter of preference." It is very certain, however, that S. Paul would have decided otherwise, or he would not have crushed the life out of the first germs of sectarianism, as soon as they appeared in the Church at Corinth. S. Peter also would have decided otherwise, or he would not have said, "be ye all of one mind, and love as brethren." And S. John would have decided otherwise, or he would not have given warning about some "who separate themselves, having not the Spirit;" nor would he have said that "a

man who is a heretic" should be rejected, and accounted unworthy of Christian fellowship. Imagine S. Paul saying to the Corinthians, "Dear brethren, I hear that there are *divisions* among you. I am sorry for it; but I suppose it cannot be helped, so long as human nature is what it is. I beseech you, then, not to disturb yourselves about those little differences which are sure to spring up. You know that Cephas, Apollos, and I, are on the best of terms; and it matters very little which of us you prefer, if (as I hope,) you have experienced religion." Now if it is inconceivable that S. Paul could thus have addressed the schismatically-minded Corinthians, what must we think of our orator's speech, which is *the same thing in all essential points*?

We come, then, to this conclusion, viz., that if the right idea of the Church of Christ is that of an unlimited number of discordant parties or denominations, we have reached the time when we stand sorely in need of *another New Testament*, in which unity shall be accounted impracticable, schism commended as a healthful exercise of Christian liberty, brotherly-love treated as a pious dream, the old Faith revised or expurgated, and "Jerusalem, our happy home," dismantled and torn down, to be reconstructed on a new model embodying the latest results of modern enlightenment.

It is a sad thing that there are loose thinkers everywhere in this troublous world; and it is still more sad to know that some of them are to be found

within the *Church's area*, greatly to the discomfort of loyal, faithful, and Christ-like souls. The ruling error of their opinion is the assumption, that the *Church* is neither more nor less than one of the "denominations" of the age—a corporation having no antecedent, or, at least, *necessary*, connection with the original and *historical Catholic Church*. Such an error is, of course, only remarkable as an indication of the extent and the depth of popular ignorance and credulity. There are thousands of men,—even educated, honest, and devout men,—who have yet to learn that the Anglican Church is older than the British Parliament, and older than the realm of England itself; that, long centuries before King Henry VIII. lay in his cradle, this same Anglican Church had purged the land from its ancient idolatries, and brightened every hill and vale with the light of the everlasting Gospel. To regard it, therefore, as one of the products of the *Reformation*, is to contradict the testimony of all history. Just as well might it be asserted, that the American Church owes its origin to General Washington and an act of Congress, as that the Anglican Church was the creation of an astute monarch and an act of Parliament. Human power, both physical and intellectual, has indeed strewn the world with monuments of its vast achievements; but, as it cannot confer *spiritual gifts*, it has never yet succeeded in making either a *Church* or a *Priest*.—The American Church in thus asserting her true origin and order of exist-

ence, is not to be censured for exclusiveness or intolerance. It is both her right and her duty to defend her own banner, and to exhibit to a distracted world the credentials by which the true Church of Christ has ever been identified. In no case has she, by her own act "unchurched" the denominations around her. Their separation from her communion and fellowship was *their own voluntary act*; and that separation has been to her a source of enduring grief. They stand, therefore, on the grounds which they have *deliberately chosen for themselves*; and if those grounds are untenable on principles accepted by the entire Catholic and Apostolic Church, the responsibility for "the divisions of Christendom" cannot be laid to the charge of a Church whose daily prayer is for "unity, peace, and concord."

## CHAPTER IV.

### A BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

ONE of the most numerous of our religious sects is that of the “Abstract,” or “Bible Christians.” These people do not associate together, like other sects or denominations, in a compact organized form, but are diffused or scattered abroad, preferring to mingle freely with all sorts of Protestant bodies, and even with the Church itself, where they can enjoy both privilege and protection, without contributing much, either as shining lights or zealous toilers, to the advantage of those around them.

Mr. Broadsides was one of these Abstracts. He was a man of some note, and of large sympathies in one particular direction,—that of what he called “the inborn *freedom of the human soul*.” He was a diligent reader of religious papers, reviews, and pamphlets; from which he sifted out what pleased him, and called it *truth*; while all besides he rejected with judicial dignity, and called it *dogmatical rubbish*.

Mr. Broadsides had thus, in the course of years, laid up in his mind a large and very miscellaneous stock of religious ideas, which he had no disposition

to systematize, lest they should take the form or semblance of a *Creed*, and thus put a check on "the inborn freedom of the human soul." And there was also another reason why he preferred a theology of many aspects, and capable of numerous forms and combinations. As he had gathered his notions of Christian doctrine from every quarter, and as every such quarter was (in his view,) more or less respectable, it had occurred to him that the present state of division among Christians was not only needless and inconvenient, but had proved to be also very *expensive*. He thought, therefore, that the shrewd and far-seeing men of the several denominations could hardly fail to see that *unity* would be to them "great gain" even in the things of *this* world, as well as a help to their prospects in the world to come. Like many others whose airy faith delights itself in visions of a bright future, in which the lion shall lie down with the lamb, he spent many a leisure hour in ruminating on the most facile methods by which that vision might perchance become a substantial reality. And it seemed to him, at last, very surprising that so much should be said and written, and preached about Christian *unity*, and so much time lost, when so easy a remedy for all the quarrels of really pious people might be found in a grand, liberal, and comprehensive platform, on which all who believe in the Bible, (at least, all Protestants,) could come together under one banner, and agree to bury all their differences in the Golgotha of the de-

parted, without a sigh or a mourning tear, but with a fervent hope that what they had buried would "rest in peace."

But this was only one among many of Mr. Broadsides' religious notions. I have called him an "Abstract" Christian; and such he was, though not strictly a "Christian" at all, being unbaptized. Nor was he really a "*Bible Christian*," as we shall presently see. He was abstracted from much that was fixed, positive, and fundamental, in the Church's teaching, and floating about, on an unbounded sea of opinion, with neither compass, rudder, anchor, nor ballast, but with all sails set to carry him whithersoever the wind might drive, or the reefs and rocks arrest him.

On two points, however, his mind was made up; 1st, that he had a *soul* which was worth saving; and 2d, that he had a *Bible* to tell him how to save that soul. Thus provided, his way seemed clear to himself. What more could he desire? Why should he look beyond himself and his *Bible*? Churches and sects were mere appendages to the *Bible*, helps indeed to the ignorant, crutches for the lame, but not essential to one who preferred the "spirit" and "power" of religion to any trust in outward and visible forms. Of course, he needed no Priest or Minister to guide him; for he could read in his *Bible* all that any Minister was authorized to teach him. "My religion," said Mr. Broadsides, "is a thing entirely *between myself and my God*. I per-

mit no Priest or Layman to interfere with the concerns of my soul." And if courtesy had not forbidden a gentleman of such urbanity to say unpleasant things to a clergyman, he would have set forth his ruling principle in terms like these :—" You, Sir, have an undoubted right to your opinions ; and so have I to mine. Perfect agreement is simply *an accident* which may, or may not, occur. *You* may honestly arrive at one view of a religious doctrine or custom ; and *I* may just as honestly arrive at another. If *I* may possibly be mistaken, so may *you*. We are both in search of Truth ; and therein we are *alike*. But you have the privilege of speaking your mind from a pulpit, while I have not ; and that is the point in which we *differ*."

It will hardly be believed, after reading this, that Mr. Broadsides, (though so decided an Abstract,) had a pew in church, and had also a great respect for the Prayer-book,—the chief objection to which was its discourteous habit of placing respectable people on the same footing with "lost sheep" and "miserable sinners." There were several reasons why his choice fell upon the *Church*, after a survey of things elsewhere. He disliked the Methodists, because they expected him to tell his "experience," which, as he conceived, was an intermeddling with his private affairs, and a matter of no concern to other people. With the Baptists he could not make himself comfortable, on account of their anxiety to immerse him, and thereby bring him into bondage to he knew

not how many other "beggarly elements." In several other denominations he failed to find any considerable number of congenial spirits. The leading men and women of those parties had evidently some mysterious designs upon his soul. They dropped significant remarks into his ear, tried to make a "member" of him, gave him scores of tracts, and invited him to prayer-meeting; all which ended in nothing, for Mr. Broadsides still remained an Abstract or a Christian at large. As a final resort, the *Church* seemed to offer some attractions. There was a quietude, old-fashioned dignity, and unobtrusiveness about it, which impressed him. The Church services won upon him, at first simply as an æsthetic exercise which it was pleasant to enjoy; and then, by degrees, as a grand and heart-stirring combination of praise, prayer, and holy training for another world; which inclined him to think that it *might* possibly prove to be the very thing of which he had read in his Bible,—the worship of God "in spirit and in truth."

Looking upon things thus favorably, Mr. Broadsides selected a pew in S. Agatha's church, and became, not indeed a Churchman, but an observant and respectful Church-goer, *i.e.*, a kind of ecclesiastical immigrant, not yet naturalized. With the routine of the services he soon became familiar; and it struck him that he could make use of them as a safe and helpful adjunct to his own scheme about the care of his soul. But, for a time there were some

things which perplexed him not a little, viz., the *Creed* and the *Postures*. The greater part of the Apostles' Creed he had no difficulty in repeating; but the latter articles bristled with so many objections that he felt himself obliged, when repeating them, to interject (silently, of course) a few words of explanation, in the manner following. "I believe in the Holy Ghost," (that is to say, in a Divine influence;) "the holy Catholic Church," (*i.e.*, in a general conflux of Protestants;) "the communion of saints," (*i.e.*, sociability among all *living* Christians, and a poetic fellowship with *dead* ones;) "the forgiveness of sins," (*i.e.*, without absolution by a priest;) "the resurrection of the body," (*i.e.*, so far as I can understand it;) "and the life everlasting," (*i.e.*, with a charitable hope for all, excepting perhaps the devils and anarchists,) "Amen," (*i.e.*, So be it, *on these terms*.)

Mr. Broadsides reconciled himself to the postures and their changes with much less trouble. He was a sensible man, capable of looking at all sides of everything, and willing to free himself from a prejudice, so soon as common-sense revealed to him its absurdity. And thus he reasoned about postures. "A man must undoubtedly be in *some* posture every moment of his life. He was in a posture when he slept in his cradle; and will be in a posture when he is laid in his coffin. There is no escape from postures, either for Bishop or Layman, Ritualist or Quaker. All, then, that we can do, is to regulate

our postures by some good and standing rule. And it seems to me that, on this matter, the directions in the Prayer-book are simple, natural, and suitable alike for a Prince and a rag-picker. If the Church had ordered that we should go on all-fours to our pews, and sit cross-legged and lazily during the Te Deum, Psalms, and hymns, and double ourselves up like slumbering bears, when we ought to be on our knees, I should have some objections to make to such postures, as unbecoming and ungraceful. But, as things are, I am content ; and the more so, as the rubrics appear to be on very good terms with the Bible."

Had Mr. Broadsides been equally discriminating, and less tenacious, about some other points, rumors would never have been heard of several friendly conflicts at the Rectory between Father Silas (the parish Priest) and his Abstract parishioner. Such things, however, did occur, and cannot help occurring, when a faithful pastor finds among his flock a sheep of foreign breed with a frisky temperament, and untoward habits in spiritual things. It was not easy for the Priest to obtain from Mr. Broadsides such intelligible views of his religious ideas, as might serve as a basis for the reconstruction of an ill-formed mind on more Churchly lines. Of course, there was no special reason why Mr. Broadsides should make a public exhibition of his theological furniture ; and so, it was only by degrees, and by chance words, that Father Silas became aware of his friend's pri-

vate interpretation of the Creed, and of his acceptance of the Church chiefly as a place of refuge from what he regarded as sectarian annoyances. At last, however, as time brings many hidden things to light, Father Silas found out what Mr. Broadsides looked upon as his strong point, viz., (as before stated,) that as he had *a soul of his own*, so had he a *Bible*, which was all-sufficient for the saving of that soul.

Father Silas was a man whose social habits and cheerful temperament made his visits always welcome at the homestead of Mr. Broadsides. On those visits he made it a rule to repay the courtesy of his host by leaving behind him some short and pithy observation which that gentleman would be likely to remember. On one of these occasions, when Father Silas was about to depart, after some rather lively religious talk, he said very quietly but distinctly to Mr. Broadsides :—"If, as you say, your soul is *your own*, I should like very much to know *how you came into possession of the property.*"

"The most extraordinary speech that I ever heard," said Mr. Broadsides after the Rector had gone. "Why didn't he ask me how I came to have a *body*; whether I got it by inheritance, or whether I bought it at auction, or imported it among other things in a lot of bric-a-brac?" And thus, for some days after, he ruminated upon that parting speech, and worked himself into an agony over it. He looked for something resembling it in his book of conundrums, and in Dr. South's sermons, and in the

“Anatomy of Melancholy,” and among the *facetiae* of Bishop Latimer, Luther, Sydney Smith, and Dr. Holmes, with no other effect than to leave him in doubt, whether the Rector meant it for a stroke of wit, or a sample of priestly wisdom.

It was otherwise with Father Silas, who had several hundreds of souls to watch over, while an Abstract Christian usually limits himself to the care or the damage of only one. The pastor was also a man of some activity in parochial work, and an acute observer of the currents and cross-currents of popular opinion on religious affairs. In the study, and out of it, he had, therefore, more to think of than the fate of some casual seeds of thought (like the above speech,) which he had dropped by the way-side, or perchance on a dry and barren soil.

In one of his perambulations about the parish, some days after this, he chanced to be passing by Mr. Broadsides’ mansion, while that gentleman was amusing himself on the lawn with the antics of his favorite dog. Not far off, on a rustic seat, lay a Quarterly, not very unlike the “Westminster,” which had probably inclined its reader to refresh himself with some bodily exercise. Father Silas was disposed to pass on after the customary civilities; for he knew that though Mr. Broadsides’ home had many attractions, yet it lacked the charm and fragrance of a Churchly atmosphere. But its owner had an object in detaining the Rector; and, in consequence, they were soon comfortably seated in the

parlor, where, before long, they drifted into a lively comparison of opinions. Mr. Broadsides, with his usual adroitness, led off the conversation in a kind of discursive prelude, light and sparkling, but finally dying out, leaving no trace behind. Then followed a gap, which Mr. Broadsides felt it incumbent upon him to bridge over by saying :—" By the way, Father Silas, that was rather an odd remark that you made the other day, just as you were going off."

" What do you refer to ? " asked the Rector.

" Well, the gist of it seemed to be that you doubted whether my soul was my own."

" I recollect now," said the Rector. " But my intention was simply to suggest that there may be some reasons for believing that your soul is *not* your own,—that is to say, on what I take to be your notion of ownership."

" Why, Sir, am I not a *man*, with a body and a soul in my own exclusive possession ? "

" You are a man, no doubt," said Father Silas, " and so am I. But I should be very sorry if my soul and body were in *my* exclusive possession."

" Then you are not as independent as *I* am ; for, above all things I stand firm on my own individuality ; and I am surprised that you should call in question so plain a matter of fact."

" Perhaps you will understand me better," said the Rector, " if you will consider how it was that you ever came to have a soul and a body, and thus to be a *man*, and not a tree, a stone, or a horse."

"Of course, God Almighty created me, both soul and body."

"Very true; but did the Almighty ever create a human being without imposing on him certain conditions which seem to be the very terms or price of his existence?"

"Before I answer such a question as that, I should like you to explain yourself a little," said Mr. Broadsides, somewhat thoughtfully.

"When God gave you a *body*, for instance, it is very certain that He did *not* also give you such an unlimited right over it as is implied in a real ownership. He did *not* give you a right to destroy your body, or to maim, abuse, or deform it, or to put to corrupt uses any one of its members. A man's body is too 'fearfully and wonderfully made' to be set free by its Maker, and abandoned to all the ignorance, raging passions, and ungovernable caprices of the soul that dwells in it. It seems to me that on your theory of the sole ownership of your body, you may use your hands for murder and theft, your tongue for cursing, slander, and lying, and your brains for the devising and furtherance of all sorts of villainy, provided that you can only manage to baffle or bribe the police, or hide yourself in a foreign land."

"O, no, no!" said Mr. Broadsides very earnestly, "I would not carry things to *that* length for all the world. God forbid."

"Yes, God *does* forbid! But what then becomes

of your '*independence*'? The truth is, that you, and I also, have a Master, a Proprietor, an *Owner*, whose right and title in us no man but a lunatic, or a philosopher with distempered brain, can deny. For, how can you say that you are your own master, when you know that there is an external Power that mocks, with infinite scorn, all your grandiloquent boasts of *independence*, and controls you, commands you, and forbids you, under peril, to do what otherwise your passions or your self-love would impel you to do?"

"Well," said Mr. Broadsides, "granting all that in regard to the *body*, I think you will hardly strain matters so far as to say that the vast and wonderful powers of the human *soul* are to be crippled and tied down, so that we must be checked, and hampered, and lectured, in our search for scientific and religious truth, and in our struggles to rise above the ignorance, the musty beliefs, and the superstitions which kept our forefathers in bondage for many a long century."

"Recollect," answered Father Silas, "that your rights over your soul are not *supreme* but *conditional*. As God never gave you a right to injure or misuse your body, *much less* are you permitted to injure or misuse your soul. As your soul is of a higher grade than your body, the conditions under which you are allowed to rule it are correspondingly far more stringent and imperative. The reasons for this are manifold. An injury to the *body* is (as a

general rule,) instantly felt ; it gives pain, anxiety, inconvenience, and often imperils health, vigor, beauty, and even life itself. The dread of results so inevitable, is ordinarily a sufficient motive to vigilance in men's care for their *bodies*. But with injuries to the *soul*, the case is quite otherwise. The human conscience is commonly less sensitive than the nerves. It does not instantly respond with a shock of pain whenever the soul receives a wound. The prick of a pin will send a thrill all over the body ; while a wicked thought or a detestable crime will often fail to disturb the soul. Besides this, dangers to the *body* are seen and known even to a child, and no sane man dares to trifle with them. But the dangers of a *soul* are not equally manifest and scrupulously guarded against. Nor are the consequences of an injury to the soul as instantaneously apparent and felt, as those of an injury to the body. Therefore we are *less* able to take care of our souls than of our bodies, without help from a Power far wiser than ourselves."

" There's a good deal of common-sense in that, no doubt," said Mr. Broadsides, " and some things so new to me that I must take time to consider them. You have a curious way of looking at things, which I am not used to, and I have to guess at your meaning sometimes. At any rate, we seem to be running on different tracks, and I can't make out whether we are coming nearer together, or getting further off. You go for *restriction*, and I go for

*liberty.* What is to hinder me? If I haven't the right to manage the concerns of my own soul, I am much mistaken. And what's the use of the Bible, if it isn't all I need to bring me to the kingdom of heaven?"

"I think the Bible itself would teach you otherwise," rejoined Father Silas. "If you take it for your guide, you must do whatever it directs. If it tells you what you must 'do to be saved,' you have no choice but to *do* that thing. The Bible tells you, for instance, that you must 'put on Christ' in *baptism*; but the Bible cannot baptize you. It tells you that unless you partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, there is no life in you; but the Bible cannot administer a Sacrament. It tells you also, among many other things, that you must cast down every lofty imagination, and bring 'into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,' otherwise you have little prospect of ever getting (as you say,) into the kingdom of heaven."

Here Mr. Broadsides remarked with some animation, "I hope you don't think that I would *willingly* go against the Bible?"

"It would distress me to think so," said the Rector. "But I am bound to say that you have adopted, and are acting upon, a principle,—no doubt unconsciously—which you *never found in your Bible*, and which nullifies all the teaching of Christ and His inspired Apostles."

"What principle do you mean?"

“ That of your own right and ability to be the sole judge, director, and supervisor of all that concerns the salvation of your soul. You have said that your soul is your own exclusive property, and that you can allow no outside interference with it, except the Bible.”

Mr. Broadsides thought for a moment, and then answered :—“ It is natural enough for you Clergymen to take the opposite ground. But, if the Bible is not sufficient for the saving of one’s soul, what use is there in scattering millions of copies all over the land, and letting every man believe that he is free to enjoy his own opinions, just as I do ? But still, if I am wrong, I am willing to hear what can be said on the other side.”

With this assurance, Father Silas proceeded thus :—“ You have said, in plain and emphatic terms, that your soul is in your own keeping. In one sense, this is true. God has ‘ given ’ you a soul, endowed it with many noble faculties, and with the possibility of enjoying a blessed immortality. But, in another and far higher sense, your soul is *not* your own, but is yours *in trust* only ; and you will most certainly be held responsible for its care or neglect. God has never surrendered to you what I may call His right of ‘ eminent domain ’ over your soul. You have therefore no right whatever (as I have already said,) to risk its interests, to debase and corrupt it, or in any way to trifle with its eternal destiny. You have, of course, the *power* to do this, but not the

right ; because your Creator never gave you such a right. This is what the Bible everywhere teaches,—that same Bible which you accept, and are bound to follow. For, most certainly you did not *make* your own soul. You are not your own Creator. GOD is your Maker, and mine. It is *He* that hath made us, and not we ourselves. This is the voice of Divine revelation ; and it is the conclusion to which sound reason itself will be sure to bring us, in spite of all possible obscuring of the matter by the ‘great swelling words of vanity’ which we every day hear, and all the ‘oppositions of science, falsely so called.’

“ If then, you accept the Bible as your guide, it is not a very wise thing for you to assert that your soul is absolutely *your own*. For, if God should hold you strictly to your words,—what would become of you ? You could derive no benefit from the *Gospel*. For, your Bible,—in flat contradiction to your assertion, plainly says :—‘Ye are not your own ; for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in *your body*, and in *your spirit*, which are GOD’S.’ (*1 Cor. vi. 10, 20.*) If you have thus been redeemed, you are *the property of your Redeemer*. If you have been ransomed, you are *the property of your Ransomer*. Hence, S. Paul says, ‘Ye are Christ’s ;’ and again, ‘whether we live or die, *we are the Lord’s*.’ From all which it is evident that the notion of a Christian man being his own master in religion, as in the ordinary things of this life, is

as unlike the Gospel as it is at variance with one's common-sense. For, it overturns the whole idea of redemption, and destroys all healthful relation between man and his Maker. '*All souls are mine*,' are the words of God Himself; '*as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, is mine.*' (*Ezek. xviii. 4.*)

"There is no harm in self-reliance, if you are quite sure that you have *within yourself* that on which you may safely rely. A man may, for instance, become conscious of having mental or muscular power equal to a certain amount of effort or demand. Knowing this, he can safely rely upon it, and is right in so doing. And if he were able to 'take care' of his *soul* by virtue of some power within himself, it would be sufficient for him to use that power, and to rely upon it. But it is very certain that no man *can*, in this way, care for his soul, though it is quite easy to *lose* it. And therefore, while it is entirely reasonable for you to take the Bible as your rule in spiritual things, it is just as *unreasonable* to make your *use* of the rule dependent on its accordance with any opinions or fancies of your own. It is not your office to *convert the Bible*; but it *is* the office of the Bible to *convert you*.

"But you go on still further, and have intimated that, in the care of your soul, you permit no interference from either priest or layman. I take for granted that this is a mere flourish of rhetoric; for you could hardly expect any sober man to understand you

literally. And, in truth you have given me some good evidence of this ; for I,—one of the priestly order,—have been actually ‘interfering’ with you and your soul, and lecturing you for the last ten or fifteen minutes, without the least check or resistance on your part. And I intend—if you will still keep quiet, and not forbid me,—to go on a little longer in violating your rule, and showing you its logical outcome. By the word ‘priest,’ then, you probably mean any one who is known as a Minister of Christ ; and you disallow the interference of any such Minister in the concerns of your soul. But here again you take a position utterly adverse to that holy book which you pretend to follow as your guide. Did not our Blessed Lord appoint a Ministry *for the very purpose* of so far ‘interfering’ with men’s souls as to convince them of their sins, enlighten their ignorance, and bring them in penitence and faith to the cross of Christ, and carefully instruct and watch over them as those who, *if left to themselves*, would be sure to perish ? And were not all the Christians of the New Testament gathered into the one only Church of their Redeemer, and lovingly tended, admonished, and fed with the very Bread of life by the pastors or ‘priests’ whom God had set over them ? Our Saviour, from the very beginning of His Ministry, taught men that religion was not a thing to be locked up in their own bosoms, like some mysterious secret or charm ; but that it was to be an open, visible, and active power, of which none who pro-

fessed it were to be ashamed, even under threats of martyrdom itself. Our Lord's followers were not a brood of Christians in the abstract, self-taught and self-governed ; but they were publicly known as His faithful and obedient disciples. They went about with Him. They formed one body, company, or Church, after His ascension. They did not indulge themselves in private notions or theories of religion, and contend that they had a natural right so to do, inasmuch as their consciences were their own, and as the light within them was all-sufficient for the welfare of their souls. On the contrary, every Christian was a member of the visible Church of his Saviour. No believer stood apart from the great 'household of God,' expecting in this state of isolation to enjoy the benefits of the Gospel, and to share in its promises. There was only one rule for all, one body of truth to be believed, one course of life to follow, and one Master to serve. To stand alone, *separate* from the kingdom of Christ, was to be as a branch cut off from the living vine ; or like a sheep outside of the fold, or a limb apart from the body, or a stone not placed in the building, or a fragment broken off from a rock, or a spark dying out because it is no longer in the fire. Had you yourself lived in those days, it is not very likely that you would have told S. Peter, S. John, S. Paul, or any other Apostle of Christ, that you would 'permit no interference' from them 'in the concerns of your soul.' If you *had* so told them, it is pretty certain that

they would have ‘delivered you over unto Satan’ for punishment, without using many words about it.\* But if such intellectual conceit was censurable in the days of the Apostles, it is not less so *now*; because, in this very land, that same Apostolic Church and Ministry are appealing to you, and to all men, in Christ’s name, and by His authority.”

It was creditable to Mr. Broadsides that he listened to these words of Father Silas with unflagging attention. But, being a prudent man, he ventured on no reply whatever, because he felt that his resort to the *Bible* in vindication of his theory, had been effectually cut off by the Rector, and the loss of that was the loss of all means of defence.

After the interview was over, he went into his

\* On this point, Cecil, one of the most amiable of the English Low Church or Evangelical Clergy, wrote in these strong terms:—“I never choose to forget that I am a PRIEST (*sic*) because I could not deprive myself of the right to dictate in my ministerial capacity. I cannot allow a man, therefore, to come to me merely as a friend, on his spiritual affairs, because I should have no authority to say to him, ‘Sir, you must do so and so.’ I cannot suffer my best friends to dictate to me in anything which concerns my ministerial duties. I have often had to encounter this spirit; and there would be no end of it, if I did not check and resist it. I plainly tell them that they know nothing of the matter. I ask them if it is decent that a man immersed in other concerns should pretend to know my affairs and duties better than myself, who, as they ought to believe, make them the study of my life?” (*Remains of the Rev. Richard Cecil, M.A.*, Andover ed., p. 39.)

library, sat down, mused like an anchorite, and became profoundly dissatisfied, partly with himself, but chiefly with the Bible and Father Silas. As time, however, passed on, he gradually fell into a better line of thought, and began to doubt whether an Abstract or Rationalistic creed—so to call it—was as safe as the old faith of the Bible—the Faith which the Catholic Church has never ceased to proclaim. The one was certainly *human*; and the other as certainly *Divine*. The one was a fluctuating, formless, and misty set of *opinions*; the other, an unchangeable, all-perfect record of eternal *truth*. The contrast, when thus plainly realized, had occasionally, but only transiently, taken hold of Mr. Broadsides' thoughts in times past; but its direct issue in determining both the faith and the practice of every Christian man, had not struck him till pointed out by Father Silas. It came *then* with all the force of a new revelation, shattering all his confidence in self-reliance, and frowning on his contempt of Christ's own visible institutions. In the end, Mr. Broadsides happily found out the only true way of “working out his own salvation,” and we will now leave him, with a kindly “*God-speed*,” in the hands of Father Silas, in whose presence, in due time, he publicly abandoned the sect of the Abstracts, at the same time that he renounced “the world, the flesh, and the devil.”

If there is any one thing which the religion of Christ utterly repudiates, denounces, and sets itself to root

out of every human heart, it is this solitary, self-admiring, and independent habit of mind, which makes a man feel and act as if *he and his Maker* were the only two beings in the universe, who are to be recognized in all the manifold duties and relations of piety. Of such people, the Rev. Edward Irving (Scotch Presbyterian,) thus speaks:—“ Each man will read the Bible for himself, having a hearty contempt for creeds, and confessions, or orthodoxy. And fine work they make of it! And they call themselves ‘Bible Christians!’ Which men I have found so self-opinioned, so prejudiced against the most venerable forms of the Church, so mighty in their own conceit, and so fond of innovation, that I have got an instinct of abhorrence towards them, and would rather hope to have communion with a superstitious Papist, than with one of these self-instructed, self-guided ‘Bible Christians,’ as they are wont to call themselves in their contempt for all who have any reverence for the authority of the Church.” (*Quoted in Christian Remembrancer*, 1867, Vol. 1.) \*

\* “ There are people who are perpetually crying out, as if they would overpower the voice of heaven itself, ‘the Bible, the Bible, the Bible alone, without note or comment;’ ” [they want] “ no authoritative interpreter, no witness, no collateral test, no providential check, no human chains and hindrances of any kind. . . . But how stand the facts of the case? *They alone* will not in *practice* endure the Bible at any time or occasion ‘without note or comment.’ . . . They must needs come in at every step with their applications, and restrictions, and true senses, and spiritual

The Apostles knew nothing of a religion which affects to be so "spiritual" as to dispense with the Church, and the Sacraments of God's own appointment. Nor did they teach that the kingdom of Christ is an "invisible" body, to which men may belong, though not in communion with the visible Church on earth. In short, the holy Catholic Church being the very "kingdom of Christ," it follows that a man has no claim on its privileges, unless he has become a citizen of it, and a loyal and true-hearted subject of its Sovereign. The Church being what Scripture declares it to be, our union with it is the visible proof of our subjection to the Son of God, just as our declining to enter that fellowship, or to be governed by it, would be an evidence of our indifference to His authority. The "Lives of the Saints" will illustrate this; for, on that long and shining roll, we find *not one* who refused openly to "confess the faith of Christ crucified;" not one who lived and died unbaptized; not one who conceived that he might have in his soul all the "essentials" of religion, while still an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel."

All this is worth thinking of by those, who, like

meanings, and Christian significations; they are ever showing a restless, a morbid suspicion and jealousy of the first and obvious meaning, and above all, do they most resent and recoil and struggle against the simple power of our Lord's own words, lest we should receive them too much as little children." (*British Critic*, No. LXV., p. 148.)

Mr. Broadsides, have fallen into the error that they can adopt the Bible as their sole guide, and yet (untrue to that guide,) remain in the position of "strangers and foreigners," *outside* of that glorious kingdom which the Bible describes as God's own creation,—the home and refuge of all who, through Christ, look for an inheritance in the heavenly Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER V.

### S. AGATHA'S SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

IN the foregoing chapter the reader has been made acquainted with Father Silas and his convert—"the Bible Christian." It was well for Mr. Broadsides that he became a frequenter of the Church, and in the end a worthy member of it, under the administration of Father Silas. If he had come to S. Agatha's at an earlier day, the issue would have been very different; for it is doubtful, at least, whether his tranquillity as an "Abstract" would have been seriously disturbed by any aggressive movement on the part of the former Rector. That reverend gentleman belonged to a school of religious speculation, of such extraordinary breadth, as to have no perceptible boundaries. And in consequence of the barren theology of the pastor, the parish languished, there was no "voice of joy and health" in the sanctuary, the altar mourned in its desolation, and it became a popular saying concerning the pulpit, that though the texts were generally plain and luminous, yet all that followed was "darkness that might be felt."

But there still remained in the parish some stir-

rings of spiritual life. There were a few faithful souls in that impoverished flock, longing for help, and patiently trusting in its unfailing Source. And that help came at length; but it was under a form of blessing not contemplated in their prayers, viz., the resignation of the Rector. To the surprise of all, it was announced that the time had arrived, when, as their pastor thought, he must seek relief from the severe pressure of parochial duty, by an indefinite period of relaxation in foreign lands; and that he hoped another would be able to build successfully on the foundation which he (the Rector,) had laid.

To this project of retirement, the Bishop and the parish gave their cordial assent; with a reserve of opinion about the Rector's exhaustion, and the depth and quality of the "foundation" he had so complacently referred to.

The vacancy in S. Agatha's was happily filled, after much deliberation in the vestry, by the election of Father Silas, who was a wise master-builder, having derived his ideas of spiritual architecture from the Bible and the Prayer-book, and found his models in the courts and palaces of "the City of God."

When Father Silas had set his house and library in order, he sat down to reflect on his position and his prospects. He had left a scene of labor where he was beloved by many, and honored by all. It had been a time of loosening old attachments, and breaking up of old associations, mingled with much

that makes the heart ache, when farewells are saddened by thoughts which reach on into the uncertainties of the future. He had now entered upon another field of exertion, where he had some reason to fear that toils and hardships awaited him, conflicts with minds unused to holy discipline, reproaches from the wilful, evil surmises among the uninstructed, alarms among the weak, and resistance from those who accounted themselves strong. Thoughts of such things will come, like shadows across the path even of the just and courageous. Father Silas knew this, and expected it. But still, trusting in God, he went among strangers with a cheerful heart, a manly confidence, a genial, loving, and tender spirit ; and he found out, in the event, how readily a large heart will make its pulsations felt, far and wide, and stir up by sympathy a reciprocal beating in every neighboring bosom.

After a few days, Father Silas took a general survey of the parish, preliminary to the formation of plans for its recovery from a state of sad depression.

There had been at S. Agatha's, all through the preceding rectorship, a Sunday-school, as a matter of course. It was commonly called "the Sabbath-school," and there was a certain appropriateness in its Mosaic name, as derived from a dispensation of shadows rather than substance. It was not—to speak precisely—a school or nursery of young disciples in "the faith once delivered to the saints ;"

but rather an institution in which children were taught an emasculated Christianity, *i.e.*, the Gospel without its positive dogma, and the Church without its fundamental principles.

Father Silas, supposing very naturally that the lambs of the flock should fall within his jurisdiction, thought proper, when his first Sunday came, to make a visit to the place in which were gathered together so important and interesting a portion of his parish. He found that the exercises of the school were held in the basement of the church. The room was large, dry, and tolerably well-lighted. In its arrangements there was nothing peculiar except a spacious closet, which formed a repository for such curiosities and apparatus as were designed for use on special occasions. A catalogue of these, subsequently taken by Father Silas ran thus:—"One large wooden god, from India; an earthen god, with eleven heads in a row, and twenty-two arms and hands; seven Chinese gods, of various patterns; a model of a Chinese pagoda; a picture-book of heathen gods; a saw from the head of a saw-fish; Turkish pipe, and slippers; stones from Mount Carmel, Jerusalem, and Mount Sinai; a stick of cedar of Lebanon; a model of Juggernaut; two tee-total banners; coins, medals, rings, nose-jewels, pieces of coral and lava, a tomahawk, a scalping-knife, and several similar articles." Many of these things, it is proper to say, were turned to account by the superintendent, by way of enforcing his occasional appeals

to the sympathies of the children in behalf of Missions to the heathen.

On entering the room Father Silas was very graciously received by Mr. Weldon, the superintendent,—a short, lively, and rather agreeable person. In a neat little speech he assured the Rector that he felt peculiarly happy in welcoming “the Minister” to the Sabbath-school; and that this visit would no doubt be equally gratifying to his assistants. He then went on to express, in fluent phrase, his opinion, that an occasional visit of this kind would have a beneficial influence on the school. “For,” said Mr. Weldon, “when our labors of love are thus recognized and encouraged by a preacher of the Word, the confidence of the children in their teachers will be strengthened; and our own minds also will be more deeply impressed with a sense of the vast interests committed to us in the charge of so many young souls.” This was spoken by Mr. Weldon with an air of admirable self-possession, implying a full consciousness that *he*, and not the *Rector*, was “master of the situation.”

When Mr. Weldon had finished his speech, he proceeded to introduce Father Silas to several of the teachers whom the reverend gentleman had not before met. All this was done with commendable etiquette, and in terms and tones not wanting in deference and ceremonial courtesy. But yet, truth obliges us to say that there was something wrong about it, which Father Silas *felt*, though he was not

able at the moment to describe or account for it. It struck him that the teachers were a little more grave and shy than was desirable, and the superintendent himself would have appeared to better advantage, had he exhibited less of condescending dignity. It was certainly a new experience for Father Silas to find his own impulsive and genial soul brought into contact with the chilly formalism of those who should have met him with far more sympathy and confidence. And yet, dubious as the case seemed, *all* was not wrong; for these same frigid natures rose at once to a higher temperature, so soon as they emerged from the region of Sunday-school life, and came into the outer air, and within the precincts of God's holy temple, and His holy worship. The spell then fell off; and though it left some trifling share of its influence behind, yet its power was gone, and the deadly charm was at an end.

Now the secret of all this mysterious restraint lay in the fact, that the government of the *school* was regarded as one thing, and the government of the *church* quite another. The parish was viewed as a sort of duplex institution,—a combination of two elements,—the church and the school. While it was conceded that Father Silas was chief officer in the one, Mr. Weldon was held to be supreme in the other. And hence sprang up a troublesome spirit of jealousy in the school, lest some encroachment should be made by the Rector on rights which were scrupulously guarded by Mr. Weldon and his

associates. This jealousy seldom slumbered ; for there was an instinctive feeling that a clergyman must, in the nature of things, be always ambitious of power, and that this propensity would be very apt to lead him into interference with the affairs of the Sunday-school. This will reveal at once the grounds of the cautious reception which was given to the Rector by Weldon and his aids. The superintendent had been shrewd enough to fortify *his own* position, in his carefully worded address to Father Silas ; and what the teachers had not sufficient tact to express in words, was amply supplied by the coolness and reserve of their behaviour.

Father Silas, then, in short, was simply the pastor of the grown-up people, and of such of the older children as had finished their religious education under Mr. Weldon. On this theory, the Rector was *not* the authoritative head of the parish, *not* the Divinely-commissioned instructor and governor of all the flock. And, when the real position of things now dawned on the mind of Father Silas, he began to feel like a stranger away from home, or like a missionary just landed on a foreign shore ; or, more literally, like a priest who had somehow wandered within the lines of another man's jurisdiction, and was welcome only to the extent of his good behaviour and submissiveness.

On closing the school, Mr. Weldon gave to Father Silas a large printed paper containing the "Constitution and Rules" of the school, intimating to him

that it would be found useful as an exhibition of the system pursued, and also as a guide in any future intercourse which the Rector might feel inclined to have with the school. It was somewhat remarkable that in this document, which filled two columns of a folio sheet, there was not to be seen an allusion to any such person as the Rector, Minister, or Pastor.\* Father Silas glanced at the paper, caught its drift, and folded it up for further reflection. The next day he amused himself by reading it aloud to assure himself that he was awake, and then laid it away among his ecclesiastical curiosities. This done, he resolved to take the school, including Weldon and his corps of teachers, under his own direct control and supervision,—quietly, if he could, or unquietly, if he must.

\* This is not fiction. A printed copy of such a P. E. S.-S. paper is in the possession of the writer.

## CHAPTER VI.

### S. AGATHA'S SUNDAY-SCHOOL.—CONTINUED.

**T**O qualify himself better for his undertaking, the Rector took the best measures he could for obtaining a perfect understanding of the nature, the practical working, and the real results, of this fair-looking Sunday-school system. But before a week had gone its round, a circumstance occurred which threw such a flood of light on the mind of the Rector, as saved him both time and trouble in the investigation before him.

It had been customary for some years past to hold a “teachers’ meeting” every week, at the house of Mr. Weldon. The object of these meetings was understood to be the interchange and comparison of religious opinions, with the hope of promoting harmony of feeling among the teachers, and uniformity of instruction in the exercises of the school. There was nothing very novel or objectionable in such meetings; and Father Silas was disposed to encourage them, because, under proper regulation, they might have a beneficial effect, not only in the school, but also on the Christian habits and sympathies of the teachers themselves.

Accordingly, Father Silas took occasion to attend one of these meetings ; at which he found Mr. Weldon presiding. The worthy superintendent was engaged at the moment in expounding, with the help of a popular sectarian Commentary, the portion of Scripture appointed as one of the school-lessons for the next Sunday. The Rector was politely offered a seat by the side of the superintendent, who trusted, as he said, that the exercises would not prove uninteresting or unsatisfactory to his visitor. Now, in ordinary cases, the place of dignity and authority would, of course, have been offered to the clergyman, on the ground both of right and courtesy. But Mr. Weldon had some private reasons for dispensing with the general rule. It was his wish (as he persuaded himself,) to give the Rector a view of the careful mode in which the teachers were trained for their work ; and this would *require*, of course, that their chief should not leave his post. The case, therefore, seemed to Mr. Weldon clear enough to shield him from blame, should any one charge him with incivility to the Rector.

Father Silas very wisely made no remark on taking the place assigned him ; and was favored by Mr. Weldon with a New Testament, in order that he might the more readily apprehend the force of the suggestions which so many minds would offer in elucidation of the sacred text. With admirable patience he endured all that came to his ears for the first fifteen or twenty minutes. It was, of course,

to be expected that there would be a great diversity among the remarks which every section of the lesson would call forth ; and it was well,—all things considered,—that the crude opinions thus elicited from the teachers were afterwards to be melted down in the crucible of Weldon's brain, and the amount of gold and dross determined by reference to the afore-said Commentary. But just as Father Silas's eyelids were beginning to droop with weariness, the monotony of the exercises was broken by one of those sharp conflicts of opinion which the Rector had already been looking for. Mr. Weldon and one of the teachers, a Mr. Ashford, had been drawn into a very threatening and noisy wrangle about the meaning of a passage of Scripture occurring in the lesson under review. The words were these :— “Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling.” (*Phil. ii. 12.*) The superintendent having given the usual interpretation, was met by a stout denial on the part of Mr. Ashford, who asserted that Weldon was under a sad misapprehension of the Apostle's meaning. Mr. Weldon quietly replied that he had never before heard the current sense of the text disputed ; and Ashford answered, that “the current sense” might be wrong notwithstanding.

“I think, then, you would oblige us all,” said Weldon, “by stating what is your own impression as to the meaning of the passage.”

To this Mr. Ashford replied rather bluntly, “I

don't wish to be disobliging; but I am doubtful whether the stating of my opinion would be of any use."

"Why do you think so?" asked Weldon.

"Because I suppose that your own mind is made up."

"I have only intimated what is the prevailing interpretation of the passage."

"And I have only intimated that it might be wrong," said Ashford.

"Well, Sir, be that as it may, I see no reason why you should decline to give us your view of the matter. You will certainly enjoy the common privilege of being respectfully heard."

"I will do so on one condition," rejoined Mr. Ashford. "If I am right, my judgment of the Apostle's meaning must not be rejected, even though I should chance to be the entire minority. I think that before you cast my judgment aside, you are bound to prove that it is *wrong*."

"Very well," said Weldon, "now please go on."

Ashford replied, "As you seem to be rather importunate, and I don't want to be too unyielding, I will state my views, though I can easily foresee how they will be received."

"Never mind that," answered Mr. Weldon; and several of the teachers cried out, "Go on, go on."

"My impression, then," began Ashford, "is this,—that by the words, 'work out,' the Apostle meant 'cast forth,' 'reject,' 'get rid of,' as if he had said,

‘Purge out your own salvation, with fear and trembling.’ This is my opinion, Sir ; and I think it makes the passage as clear as daylight.”

This was said by Mr. Ashford with a firm voice and a good deal of emphasis, to the astonishment of every one, especially Weldon, who asked the speaker whether his words had been seriously and thoughtfully considered.

“Undoubtedly,” answered that gentleman.

“But surely you don’t mean to say that S. Paul would require us to do so impious a thing,” continued Mr. Weldon.

“It is *not* impious, Sir, but a primary Christian duty.”

“Do you mean to affirm that it is *not* an impious thing to reject or get rid of the salvation of our souls ?”

“Ah ! my dear Weldon,” said Ashford, “there’s your mistake. As I said before, you really don’t understand the Apostle, nor the exact force and bearing of those words, ‘*your own salvation.*’ ”

“How so ?” cried out Weldon.

“I take it, Sir, that what is here meant by a man’s ‘*own salvation,*’ is his own righteousness, his filthy rags, his imaginary merits, as contrasted with GOD’S method or plan of salvation ; and therefore, the sooner a man gets rid of his *own way* of salvation, and makes room in his heart for the Gospel, the better will it be for him both in this world and the next.”

Here it must be confessed that Mr. Weldon was a little confused, and remained silent for some moments. Ashford meantime looked alternately at him and the teachers, with the air of one who has achieved a stupendous victory.

"I see now," said the superintendent on recovering himself, "I see now the ridiculous whim which you have undertaken to defend."

"Not so fast, brother Weldon," said Ashford; "I have not quite done with this matter yet. I want you to tell me frankly whether my interpretation is, or is not, good, sound, Bible doctrine?"

"Well, granting that it is, it does not follow that the Apostle says any such thing in this particular text."

"Just so, if your view is the *right* one. But don't you see that you are begging the whole question, without a single word of argument? For my own part, I should like to know what can be clearer than the view I have given? Is it not almost exactly like what the Apostle says in another place:—'Purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness'? and do I not sustain myself by thus comparing one text with another?"

"How can you, Mr. Ashford, or anybody else, defend a mere novel and fantastic notion in opposition to the judgment of the ablest divines and most learned commentators, and in downright contempt of the views of our pious Reformers?"

"I don't see" rejoined Ashford, "why *my* opin-

ions are not as good as the opinions of other people. If they have given *their* views, why may I not give *mine*? I have the Bible, thank God, without note or comment. From this source I must draw my religion on my own responsibility; and what I think is written in the Bible, that I am bound to teach my class."

"But," said Mr. Weldon, "how do you know that you read the Bible rightly? You can't claim to be infallible."

"I know it; and neither can *you*," retorted Ashford.

"But, Sir, I seek relief for *my* fallibility by the diligent study of commentators."

"That's all very well," said the teacher; "but you know as well as I do that there are plenty of commentators who advocate all sorts of false doctrine."

Weldon tried to evade this thrust by saying, "I am really sorry, *very* sorry, Mr. Ashford, that the peace of our meeting should be thus disturbed by questions and strifes of words."

"So am I," said the indomitable teacher, "and I am all the more sorry when I know that the strife springs entirely from your dislike of my interpretation."

"I dislike it," answered Weldon, "because it is utterly *wrong*."

"But that is the very point which you have not yet proved. You have brought no evidence against

me but your own opinion, and a reference to the opinions of some other men."

"I contend that you wrest the Apostle's words from their natural meaning," said Mr. Weldon.

"That may be *your* impression; but it is not *mine*."

"I say you are *wrong*, Sir," said Weldon, growing warm; "and I can prove it."

"And I say that I am *right*," replied Ashford; "and I challenge you to make out the contrary."

"The best and most learned of our modern writers are against you," said the one

"But, pray tell me," said the other, "who shall answer for those modern writers?"

At this point the controversy came to a sudden halt, as neither of the parties seemed able to find his way out of the fog. Father Silas, who all along had been struggling to conceal his mirth, then rose up, and said, with a smile: "Though this debate has been a rather informal one, and has ended without gain or glory to either of the combatants, yet it will help me very much in finding out, (among other things,) what sort of milk you are here accustomed to use every Sunday, in feeding the babes of Christ. I must also take leave to say, that all through the debate, it has been taken for granted that S. Paul was familiar with the *English language*, and that he wrote to the Philippians an English letter containing the words, 'work out your own salvation.' Now, if the debaters had only borne in mind that the

Apostle Paul was neither an Englishman nor an American, and that his letter was written in *Greek*, there would have been no dispute at all ; for a reference to the original would be enough to settle the matter at once.

“ Let me also have your attention while I say a few words more. I am very glad that our friend, the teacher, took good care to keep within the lines of sound doctrine, in his fanciful treatment of four or five English words. Too often, in contests of this kind, there is at least a side-long attack, if not a direct one, on some point of the Christian Faith, or on some fundamental Church principle. Private judgment is a good thing when soberly exercised ; but it is very apt to run into private *nonsense*, private conceit, and an unholy trifling with the most sacred things. We may see proofs of this all around us. There is not a single false doctrine, heresy, or crazy perversion of God’s word, which has not sprung from an abuse of the Bible by private speculation about its meaning. Think of this ; and then think how much better it would be for every reader of the Bible, if he could say, with one of the most learned of the ancient Fathers, ‘ I thank God that *I am not ignorant of my own ignorance.*’ If such a man as Origen could say this, who among us will be rash enough to idolize his own private notions or opinions ?\* I value *my* private judgment as much

\* S. T. Coleridge, speaking of private judgment, says that he “ condemns only the pretended right of every Individual,

as you value *yours*. But what is the use of that judgment if God has left us (as many believe) without a Guide to lead us safely through that wild chaos of human opinions with which the world is now distracted? Happily, God has *not* so left us; but, with infinite wisdom and love, has founded a *Church*, in which ‘the Faith once delivered’ to it, was to be forever preserved inviolate, and to be thus taught to every Christian man, woman, and child, from the Apostles’ days downward, till the end of the world. To this Church, and to *no other religious body whatever*, did the Holy Ghost give the power and the right to be known as ‘the pillar and ground of the Truth.’ The use, then, that I have made of *my* private judgment, has been, 1st, to find with certainty *this very Church*; and 2d, to accept it as my *Divinely-appointed Teacher*. I therefore confide in the Church, just as a child confides in

competent and incompetent, to interpret Scripture in a sense of his own, in opposition to the judgment of the Church, without knowledge of the Originals or of the Languages, the History, Customs, Opinions and Controversies of the Age and Country in which they were written; and where the Interpreter judges in ignorance or in contempt of uninterrupted Tradition, the unanimous consent of Fathers and Councils, and the universal Faith of the Church in all ages. It is not the attempt to form a judgment, which is here called in question; but the grounds, or rather the *no-grounds*, on which the Judgment is formed and relied on,—the self-willed and separative (*schismatic,*) Setting-up (*hæresis.*)” (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 331.)

his wise and loving mother. She hands me the Bible as her text-book, tells me precisely what it means, explains to me its mysteries ; and thus, by gentle degrees, brings my whole mind into harmony with its wonderful truths and facts.

"Let me advise you to think seriously of these hints when you go to your homes. I thank you for your patient listening, and hope that, by the Divine blessing, the events of this evening may be a help and a warning to you, in teaching the children of God's Church, 'what things they ought to believe and to do.'"

The meeting closed with a hymn and a collect ; and when all parties reached their homes they had something to reflect upon. Possibly their evening slumbers would have been less tranquil had they known what thoughts had found place in their Rector's mind. Before midnight, Father Silas had sketched a paper informing the Wardens and Vestry that, unless the entire control of instruction in the Sunday-school were yielded to him, in virtue of his office, there would be an immediate vacancy in the Rectorship. But before sending this paper, he concluded first to try the issue of private remonstrance and instruction.

This was the resolve of one who knew the full import of his sacred vows, and the peril of unfaithfulness in guarding the flock which he was sent to protect. But what if the sheep will not obey the shepherd's voice ? It had not taken long for Father

Silas to find out that S. Agatha's was one of those parishes where the vacant places of the faithful departed had been filled by others not inheriting their valorous devotion. The younger element thus let in, was merely an accession of showy and vapory sentiment, with no deeply rooted faith, no instinctive reverence, no Churchly aspirations, but only that thin and starveling religion, under which the youth of the parish had graduated in the barren region of the Sunday-school. Could a Christian priest see this, sanction it, and conform his teaching to it, without surrendering both his Creed and his conscience?

The next movement of Father Silas may perhaps surprise the reader. His quiet discernment of character had enabled him to take an accurate measurement of Mr. Weldon, and to inspire him with a hope of making that gentleman his most efficient co-adjutor in the reformation of the Sunday-school. While the Rector was quite aware of the slips and errors to which any impulsive man is liable, yet he recognized under Weldon's busy and earnest mode of action, such elements of conscientiousness, fidelity, and moral straightforwardness, as needed only to be moulded on a better model, to produce a far nobler specimen of renovated manhood than was, as yet, visible in this honest-minded but ill-trained principal of a Church school. It was only necessary for Father Silas to be reasonably confident of this, to start in his own far-seeing mind a line of conduct, having for its end the gaining for Mr. Weldon a far

higher sphere of spiritual development than that gentleman had as yet attained. It was evident that the chief teacher needed again to be taught "which be the first principles" of the doctrine of Christ; and consequently, that the children were "spending their strength for nought," while they were under instructors disqualified to give form and stability to their faith. Weldon's theology was not of a Churchly sort; but still, he was well-disposed, sincere in his way, and by natural constitution destined for activity. But this activity (as we have seen,) had no fixed line on which to act nobly, energetically, and consistently. It was a power driving onward, sideward, to the right hand and the left, with uncertain and ever-shifting mutability, all the time purposing well, but incapable of centering all purposes on a clearly-defined idea either of the Christian Church or of the Christian Faith.

Father Silas's parish work had now taken the form of an *experiment*, the issue of which he was resolved to see, and thus learn whether his relation to S. Agatha's was that of its Rector, or only its hired servant.

It came to his ears one day, much to his surprise, that Mr. Ashford's encounter with the superintendent had been *premeditated*, and had a very curious origin and purpose. There had been for some time, in the minds of the teachers, a growing dislike of some of Mr. Weldon's methods, his arbitrary rule, and the summary way in which he disposed of opin-

ions not coinciding with his own. Ashford shared in these feelings, and had reasons of his own for distrusting Mr. Weldon's theological bias. Several books on Church history and doctrine had recently caught his (Ashford's) attention, and were already working a most unexpected revolution of his religious ideas. He read these books with avidity, and had discernment and candor enough not only to see his errors, but to shake them off without regret. He ventured also to reveal to some of his fellow-teachers the change which was progressing in his own mind, and which (as he thought,) was of too serious import to be confined entirely to himself. He was reluctant, however, to offer any hints or suggestions to the *superintendent*; because there seemed to be little hope of gaining access to Weldon's mind by any ordinary method of approach. The great obstacle in Mr. Ashford's way was Weldon's extreme sensitiveness on the right of *private judgment* on all religious questions. Ashford knew this; and he knew also that so long as this foible held its place, the advancement of the school to a higher grade would be quite impracticable; and, being a man of considerable wit, tact, and fluency of speech, he devised a scheme for setting on foot a playful but efficient contest with the superintendent, as the only available mode by which Weldon could be made conscious of the absurdity and mischievous nature of his pet notion. How this project was carried out, has been already related; and though, at the time,

the teachers saw nothing further than a sportive attack on Mr. Weldon, yet its far deeper significance began to flash upon their minds under the forcible words of Father Silas which immediately followed.

When the Rector found that Ashford had thus been the means of kindling a light in the parish which was not likely to be soon put out, he took courage, and thanked God for the consolation. The assurance that he had in the school even *one* earnest friend, was not only a relief to him, but an encouragement also to those who were daily praying that God would revive His work in the parish, and restore what had been "decayed by the carnal will and frailness of man." Father Silas took occasion also to apologize to Mr. Ashford, for reminding him (in his speech) that S. Paul did not write the *English* words in dispute. Of course, Ashford knew this quite well, while he was giving Weldon a specimen lesson on the possibilities of private judgment.

There is some danger of checking a religious movement by too great precipitation or haste in directing it. Father Silas, though somewhat elated, was not forgetful of this, but allowed two or three weeks to pass without much change in his parish work; thus giving time for the new leaven to do its office silently, both in the school and the parish. All this time Mr. Weldon's mind was in a very disturbed condition. His defeat by Ashford could not easily be forgotten. But, aside from this, he had unexpectedly been made conscious that there must

be *somewhere* a higher test of truth than any man's own personal judgment. Ashford's argument had shown this; and Father Silas had pointed out where that test would be found, viz., in the Church of the living God. This was almost a new thought to Weldon, though he had been for many years "a member incorporate" of that Church, had repeated her Creed hundreds of times, knelt at her altars, and become a chief teacher of her children! In contrast with this, Mr. Ashford had already imbibed enough of Church doctrine to understand the perplexity of the superintendent, and to give him some sensible advice. For the first time in his life, Mr. Weldon began to distrust himself, and to suspect that he had been trying to walk in the Church's "heavenly ways," with sectarian scales on his eyes. Very naturally he had failed to see what stress the Prayer-book lays on objective truths; how it exalts the wisdom of God, and contemns the pride of man; and how it sets forth the one unchangeable Faith, before which all human souls must bow, and even the devils tremble. Weldon was thus very gradually coming to a better understanding of himself, and of the untenableness of his notions about Christian education. "A tree is known by its fruits;" and Father Silas saw those fruits in a generation of young people whose training had *not* made them valiant soldiers in the Church militant, but fitted them rather for recruits in "the armies of the aliens." In spite of the dazzling outward aspect of the school,

and the devotion of its teachers, it was apparent that the *memories* of the children had been exercised at the expense of their hearts and minds. Large portions of the Gospels and S. Paul's Epistles, with numerous hymns, gleanings from Old Testament narratives, and parables from the New, had taxed the memories, and worried the mothers, of these poor lambs of Christ, while many of them knew only by rote the Catechism which the Church had provided for every child's instruction. To them, the Church in which they were baptized was simply one of the "Protestant denominations," having a set form of worship, clothing its clergy in white or black robes, and visited occasionally by a venerable old Minister called "Bishop," who wore lawn sleeves, and laid his hands on people's heads to confirm them. The very solemn truth that they themselves were "members of Christ," and the "children of God," had hardly entered their thoughts; but they had been taught to look forward to a time when, by some direct visitation of the Holy Spirit, they might *become* such, and thus be ranked among "Church members."

This sort of defective teaching was not adopted simply in view of the youthfulness of the pupils; for they were as capable of learning the *truth* as of being led astray into *error*. The fault was in the lax and time-serving system of the school. It was not the aim of that system to mould the youth of the parish into the shape of firm-hearted Church-

men. Such teaching was carefully avoided, on the ground that it would result in the emptying of half the pews, and in giving offense to many outsiders who (as the phrase is,) were "favorably inclined toward the Church." And thus, numbers, popularity, and money, were put into the balance with truth and heaven, and were thought weighty enough to bear down the scale. It did not occur to any one that this was not unlike the selling of Christ for so many pieces of silver.

Mr. Ashford had to struggle for some time before he could fairly set Mr. Weldon's face Zionward. But he finally succeeded, greatly to the satisfaction of himself and Father Silas. In several talks at the parsonage, Weldon had acquitted himself well ; and the hopes of the Rector were confirmed, although it was yet uncertain how far Weldon's stability would bear the strain of a searching test. Father Silas also found that there was more or less of Churchly thought quietly spreading through the parish, in consequence of his clear and positive teaching, and as a re-action from the listless torpor of former years.

## CHAPTER VII.

### S. AGATHA'S SUNDAY-SCHOOL—CONCLUDED.

AT length, the time arrived when the Rector could safely venture to state the defects of the school, and to make it a more truthful and safe auxiliary to his own pastoral work. A movement of this kind being of importance to the whole parish, Father Silas requested the teachers, with Weldon, and the leading members of the congregation, to meet him in the school-room on an appointed evening. A short service was held, and the Rector then unburdened his mind in an address, of which only some sketches can here be given. Speaking more especially to Weldon and the teachers, he said ; " My dear friends, I have called you together this evening, with the view of inviting your co-operation in an effort to bring our Sunday-school into a more perfect accord with the teaching of the Church. I am about to speak, not so much of mistakes on your part, as of radical defects in the theory and practice of the school itself. I have reason, indeed, to thank you for your fidelity in meeting the duties you had undertaken to perform. No complaints have been heard, and no one can doubt your

affectionate concern for the welfare of those under your training. I am obliged, however, to speak otherwise of the *system* on which you have been acting. I consider it so faulty in principle, and imperfect in its details, so out of sympathy with the Church which it should serve, so inefficient in the assertion and defense of ‘our most holy faith,’ that it neither has, nor ever *can* have, any share of my confidence. On the contrary, I regard it as nothing less than a formidable engine to batter down the walls which it is my office to build up. It is an institution which, so long as its power is thus misapplied, will painfully embarrass me in a line of duty which I have promised and vowed to fulfil. For, while I, in the pulpit and elsewhere, am striving to bring my flock ‘in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,’ the teachers of this school are laboring, (no doubt, unintentionally,) to counteract all my endeavors; and are really leaving the children of the Church exposed to the danger of being ‘tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.’ What has been the aim of this school, but to teach a vague and *popular* religion, trimmed down to suit the times,—a Gospel stripped of its ancient glory; a Gospel at war with the Gospel-Church; and the Creed so interpreted that even heresy and schism may safely subscribe it? I have not a doubt that much less mischief would be done by adopting

an *avowedly sectarian* course of teaching; for, *then*, every honest and sensible Churchman would know what to expect, and would arm himself with the shield of faith, and promptly withdraw his children from the school as from a scene of contamination. In plain words, this school assumes to be what it really *is not*,—a faithful nursery of baptized children, on whose brows was traced the sign of their Saviour's cross. I say this deliberately, and can confirm what I say by facts which it is painful even to think of. The youth of the Church are here growing up in ignorance of their own spiritual Mother, and of their near and most dear relation to her. The natural issue of this is disaffection, and the roving of many into other folds. You all know, or ought to know, that a child brought up under such a system can never enjoy ‘the confidence of a certain faith,’ till he finds out and shakes off the errors grafted on his soul in his youthful years. Surely the very thought of this should stir the spirit of any one who, meaning well, has *only* this as the fruit of his labor. I say this, in order to show you distinctly the errors of the past, and to put you on your guard against similar failures in the future. While I lament those errors, I have no reason to distrust the conscientiousness of any one here present. You have not been unmindful that your position was one of great responsibility. It is my desire to set before you that responsibility in its true light, and also to share it with you; so that, by God's

help, we may never be found guilty of knowingly placing in the mind of any one child for whom Christ died, a foundation of false doctrine, as a basis on which religious uncertainty, folly, or indifference, may hereafter be built."

Here Father Silas paused for a moment; and one of the teachers, who was a young doctor, said,—“If the ailments of the school are, as you believe, organic and constitutional, I should like to know how you propose to cure them.”

“That is what I was about to tell you,” replied Father Silas, “and I thank you for helping me to an illustration. Everybody knows that for the successful treatment of the maladies to which all men are subject, the physician must have some knowledge of the structure of the human body, and of the offices, and relations, and liabilities to derangement, of its several parts or members. It is just so in dealing with the infirmities of a religious or moral institution. Suppose then we are dealing with so frail a thing as a Sunday-school sometimes is, and wish to see it working with all the vigor of perfect health. We must, first of all, have in our minds a correct *ideal* of what such a school *is*, or *ought to be*; and then try to bring it into conformity with that ideal. I say, then, that a parish Sunday-school should be nothing less than a component part (though a very small one) of ‘the body of Christ.’ And ‘the body of Christ’ is that great and wonderful organic structure which is called in the Creed, the ‘one, holy,

Catholic and Apostolic Church.' Of this Church, you and I became members by our baptism ; and as God has constituted that Church the great Instructor of the whole human race, we are bound by our baptism to receive, and 'earnestly contend for,' the Faith which she teaches, and thus prepare ourselves and others to lead a 'godly, righteous, and sober life.'

"One of the first things, therefore, that every baptized child should learn, is, that he belongs, *not* to some religious sect or denomination, but to that very organization, kingdom, or 'Church, which was founded by our Lord and His Apostles ; and which, 'through the ages all along' has been the central source of spiritual life, moral progress, and enlightened civilization, to all the nations of the earth. I lay stress upon this, because I am very certain that the teaching of this school has hitherto been that of a mere *Episcopal sect*, while *no such sect is known or thought of as possible in the Church of Christ*. Unless, then, a teacher can distinctly apprehend the difference between the one Church which the Son of God Himself founded, and the religious sects, which are of merely human creation, he cannot explain to any child what was done for him in baptism, nor will he be able to teach him, except by rote, 'all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health.' The prevailing folly of our times is that of building up a showy and fragile form of Christian life, on a basis as loose

and insecure as itself; although our Lord has told us plainly what the foolish man may expect, who builds his house on the sand.

“There is one other point which, I am sorry to say, the system pursued in this school obliges me to state with some decision. It is this, viz., that the Rector of a parish is, by the very nature of his office, responsible for the spiritual oversight and instruction of every member of his flock, whether old or young. In regard to the religious education of children, the Church recognizes three parties as teachers, 1st, the Parents; 2d the Sponsors; and 3rd the spiritual Pastor, as the chief teacher, guide, and guardian of his whole flock. When all these parties are faithful to their duty, the children of a parish will be its strength and glory. Your sons will ‘grow up as the young plants,’ and your daughters will be ‘as the polished corners of the temple.’ If the idea of a Sunday-school ever entered the mind of the Church, it could only be that of a meeting together of *parents, sponsors, and children*, for the more perfect discharge of their holy work, and for mutual counsel, help, and sympathy. The modern Sunday-school is quite another thing. It has gradually encroached on the duties and rights of the clergy, and very generally become an unauthorized substitute for parental and sponsorial teaching. My desire, then, is, to restore the complete and admirable system, which the Church long ago prescribed, and under which a far nobler race of Christians and

Churchmen may be formed, than we can hope for so long as that system is ignored. Let the Sunday-school be simply a *help* in doing a good work ; and not a substitute for parents, sponsors, and Rectors. I make the proposal to you, with a strong hope and trust that it will meet your approval, and that you will gladly co-operate with me in carrying it into effect."

Father Silas was somewhat surprised on finding that no visible or audible signs of dissatisfaction followed his speech. There was for some time a deep silence, and an appearance of thoughtfulness among all present, except in the case of a female teacher who rose abruptly and left the room. It was for Mr. Weldon to break the silence ; and this he did by saying, that, while he felt grateful to the Rector for so frank an expression of his opinions, he still thought that the school had merits enough to atone for a good many defects. If, however, a new order of things was desirable, he would be quite willing to take a subordinate part in the experiment, leaving to the Rector all responsibility for the issue. This was followed by a general stir among the teachers, who, laying their heads together, made sundry criticisms on Weldon and Father Silas. The beginnings of strife, however, were checked by Mr. Ashford, whose coolness and geniality of temper soon brought the malcontents to terms, and to an adoption of the pacific course marked out by Weldon.

In accepting the services of the teachers, Father

Silas had in view chiefly the familiarity they possessed with the routine of teaching, and their knowledge of the capacities, temperaments, and moral character of the several children. But he reserved to himself the right of releasing from duty any incompetent or disloyal teacher, and of receiving others on whose faithfulness he could rely.

Under a sense of liberty as grateful as it was novel, the Rector now began his work of restoration in the school, and of remoulding the sentiment of the parish. It will not be practicable here to make record of all his movements; but their Churchly direction and leading traits may be shown in a brief outline.

Father Silas followed up his stirring instructions to parents, by equally strong efforts to revive, or rather create, in the minds of God-fathers and God-mothers, a sense of the responsibility they had assumed at the font, where this most serious warning was given them :—“ Ye must remember, that *it is your parts and duties to see that this Infant be taught*, so soon as he shall be able to learn, *what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you*,” etc. At the time when these words were written, parental and sponsorial duty was made *primary* and *obligatory*, while they are *now* too often surrendered to the uncertain and possibly heretical teaching of a Sunday-school. On this home teaching of children, to fit them for public Catechising, Father Silas insisted with great earnest-

ness, because it is the Church's method, whereby millions of children have been virtuously brought up to lead such a Christian life as is represented in their Baptism.

The Rector also opposed most strenuously that fatal error of the Sunday-school,—the substituting of its own brief and imperfect service for the public worship of God in His holy temple. “It is the right, the privilege, and the duty, of every baptized child,” said Father Silas, “to engage with heart and voice, (so soon as he is able,) in the Church's authorized offering of prayer and praise; and no human institution can be suffered to interfere with this branch of a child's spiritual culture. In the Catechism, every child is taught to say: ‘I desire my Lord God . . . . to send His grace unto me, and to all people, that *we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him, as we ought to do.*’ This was the teaching of God's Church, long before Sunday-schools were invented. In those days, parents and children knelt together in the presence of their God and Saviour; and each of them could honestly say:—‘Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.’ But in *these* days, as we approach the house of God, we are too often met by a scattering crowd of parish children, in full retreat from the church, thoughtless, noisy, and irreverent in their behaviour, untrained in the Church's worship, and hastening home to spend, as they choose, those sacred hours, which

the Sunday-school has virtually permitted them *not* to keep holy."

As all baptized children are entitled to Confirmation and the Holy Communion, though not yet actual recipients "by reason of their tender age," Father Silas regarded every child as in preparation for "the laying on of hands," and then for the Sacrament of the altar. Accordingly, he laid out a progressive line of Churchly instruction, under which the formation of holy principles and habits in view of a future reception of sacramental grace, was kept distinctly before the minds of all the children. On this plan, the danger was avoided of "getting up," on short notice, a class of youthful "candidates for Confirmation," whose interest in the Church and their own souls is apt to vanish away like a fleecy cloud or a transient dream.

Father Silas devoted one evening of each week to the instruction of Weldon and his corps of teachers. With the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, they had already that general acquaintance which is readily attained even by intelligent sectarians. But, in addition to this, the Rector gradually unfolded to them the inner spirit of the Creed they professed, the true nature and origin of the Catholic Church, its Apostolic Order, Sacraments, ritual, and holy-days and seasons, thereby rendering them safe and valuable aids in his work among the young. A similar course of instruction was given by the Rector to a class of young people, as supplementary to the monthly

catechising of the younger children before the congregation.

Children remaining unbaptized through the negligence or ignorance of parents, were formed into a class by themselves, and were taught their duty towards God and their neighbour, with a simple prayer that God would prepare the way for their speedy baptism. The first four questions and answers of the Catechism were, of course, *interdicted* to this class, as the repetition of the answers would involve connivance with *falsehood*.

In another department of the school, Father Silas gathered together a number of children not professedly belonging to the parish, but gleaned from the streets, or from the abodes of the wretched ; intending by this to realize some of the peculiar benefits of Mr. Raikes's plan, by affording instruction to poor and ignorant children, whose parents were not disposed or qualified to render it themselves.

The purgation of the children's library was a work of time and labor. It was a motley collection, chiefly of semi-religious story-books, many of them imbued with the spirit and rancour of Puritanism. Several of the tales were of that class in which the manliness and pluck of the *bad* boy, are far more impressive than the spiritless amiability of the *good* one. It need hardly be said that the few really instructive Church books, were not much defaced by marks of diligent reading. The books rejected by the Rector were sent to the paper-mill, as the best way of turn-

ing them to account. From these sketches it will be seen that the true office of a Sunday-school is that of a *help*, (where needed,) in the training of children to fulfil the vow and promise made at their baptism. The claim of independent position, and an inherent right to set forth its own principles, and to take upon itself the care and nurture of the souls of the young, irrespective of the higher authority of the Church and the oversight of her pastors, is an usurpation of power which must secretly undermine all stability of faith, and unity of spirit, in the parish which gives it shelter. But, aside from these abuses, the Sunday-school may become a valuable adjunct to the Church. Children are more easily brought into unity of mind and purpose when they are visibly grouped together. The uplifted voices of a crowd of children repeating the Creed, will deepen and confirm the faith of each member of that crowd. Unity of any kind is best promoted by giving it some outward and visible expression. Children when assembled in one compact and sympathising body can also be more effectively addressed than in the family or from the pulpit. Facility is thus afforded for pointed and useful suggestions concerning behaviour in the house of God, reverence for all sacred things, errors in doctrine or worship, and breaches of morality. Occasion is also given for practical instruction in the music of the Church, and in all the details of rite and ceremony in the order of Divine worship. With such aims, the Sunday-school is the handmaid and well-

ordered helper of the Church, rather than its intrusive and often obstructive rival.

The fruits of Father Silas's reform in S. Agatha's school soon became apparent. In less than a year the superiority of the Churchly system of teaching had won the assent of Mr. Weldon, and silenced all the murmurs of the disaffected. To the gratification of parents, it was discovered, that while there was less strain on the minds of the children than under the former *regime*, yet the amount of instruction received was far greater and more definite. The lessons were no longer a burden to the memory, nor a weariness to both the flesh and the spirit ; and thus the *affections* of the children were drawn forth in alliance with the exercise of the intellect. In former days, though Scripture lessons and Prayer-book Collects were used and committed to memory, yet the comments of the teachers were too hazy, fragmentary, and prosy, to give light and interest to a child's unsettled mind. This misty and unsystematic teaching was brought to a speedy end by Father Silas. He set before the children's minds a distinct and well-defined object,—the luminous Creed of Christendom, in which all the rays of the Gospel of Christ converge. Every article of this body of heavenly truth was impressed on the hearts of the children, by successive lessons and expositions, and made influential on their lives. The Creed, thus received and believed as the basis of all doctrinal teaching, was also the test and corrective

of all the errors, heresies, and schismatical theories of the day, and an unfailing source of strength and vitality in the development of the saintly life.

The reader will, of course understand that the improvements in the *parish* kept pace with those in the Sunday-school. Before the expiration of Father Silas's second year, he had instituted early Celebrations of the most Holy Sacrament on every Sunday and holy-day; had established several guilds, clubs, and benevolent societies; had hired and furnished a reading-room for working-men; organized a choir of men and boys; and, by diligent training, had so familiarized the congregation with choral service as to qualify them to join with heart and voice in the worship of their Lord and Saviour.

It may be remarked, as a closing word, that the tone of decision and Christian manliness thus prevailing in the school, and also very noticeable in the parish, had a visible effect in modifying and enlightening public sentiment concerning the Church and its claims. As time passed on, accessions to the Church from the religious bodies around, and from the ranks of doubtful but honest truth-seekers, became numerous and valuable. Men at large began to see in the Church a constitution and authority more than human, and a Faith which no earthly power could either create or destroy. Men of calm reflection were moved, by the unswerving faith and martyr-like devotion of Father Silas, and by the glowing life of the parish, to search for themselves, and to

discover, if possible, the secret cause of a faithfulness that would never bend to error, and a confidence that neither trial nor reproach could shake. And in their search no other explication could they find for this strange phenomenon, than a conviction that these people,—unlike the homeless wanderers in the deserts of misbelief,—had found a secure abode in that “city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God,” and were verily citizens of that Kingdom and Church of the Redeemer, against which no worldly weapon can ever prosper, nor the gates of hell ever prevail.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PRIEST AND THE NEOPHYTE.

DR. PENROSE was rector of Patrington, a village of moderate size, with a church, and several meeting-houses. The Doctor was a man of character, as the reader will find out in the pages following. It is needful only to say in advance, that he was forty-five years old, a Churchman of the old-fashioned type, and was revered for his wisdom, respected for his fidelity, loved for his tenderness, and envied for his wife.

The Doctor was sitting in his study one morning, when he received a letter from a farmer, whose name was Hardpan, with the request that it should be promptly answered.

Mr. Hardpan was a man of thrift, property, and consequence. His early life had been a long struggle with adversity and its accompanying grievances; but, through all this, there was in his mind a floating image of a homestead, with its productive fields, a nice investment in stocks and bonds, and the respectful deference of many less fortunate neighbours. All this he had now attained by his indomitable energy, hopefulness, and self-reliance. Hardpan, the

toiling clod-hopper of former days, had become the *nabob* for miles around. Everybody knew it, and some of them *felt* it.

But prosperous as he was, Mr. Hardpan had occasion very often to lament that, in his ideal of life and its charms, he had forgotten to include the schoolmaster. Arithmetic he knew, and tables of interest ; for they had grown familiar to him by incessant practice. But, in other departments, a stripling of ten years' old would have outranked him. His writing might have passed for Syriac, his spelling as an exercise in phonetics, and his grammar as a felicitous array of conundrums. This was quite apparent to Dr. Penrose, when he opened the aforesaid letter, and entered upon its interpretation. It was a long rambling statement of Mr. Hardpan's religious experience, his conversion at a camp-meeting, about eight months before, his desire to become "a Member of the Episcopal Church," and his wish to be baptized, *in private*, "on Monday next," as he "expected to be in the village on that day, on business."

There were several things in Mr. Hardpan's letter, which led the Doctor into a train of rather unpleasant reflections. There was a tone of assurance or self-complacency about it, which was out of the line of such communications. By no word or allusion did the writer seem conscious that the *Rector* might possibly have a word to say in the case. Mr. Hardpan evidently believed that he was the best

judge of his own fitness for baptism, or for anything else ; and so, he ended his letter with these significant words :—“ I expect to be at Episcopal meeting next Sabbath day, if the Waggins in order and if the Wethers good. You may put my name down on the book as a *Member*, for I shall come to the saycrament next time. And I hop to come pritty reglar, if I find it konvenient, or think it necessary.” The Doctor, in replying, made no comments, but invited Mr. Hardpan to an interview.

When Sunday came, the sun shone brightly, and everything seemed to favor Mr. Hardpan’s attendance at “ Episcopal meeting.” In God’s holy temple, litanies and hallelujahs, misereres and hosannas burst forth alternately from the worshippers, and were wafted onward to the throne of God. And in that temple was a font, and also a priest to attend it, and mystical waters might have flowed for the washing away of sin. The Great Baptizer was there, invisibly present, to receive and to bless. Mingled with the faithful were some of the unregenerate,—“ hearers of the word, but not doers thereof.” They had come because it is honorable to render even an outward homage to the King of kings, and safer to keep holy-day near the altar of God, than to profane it in “ the tents of ungodliness.” But *Mr. Hardpan was not there.* Instead of preparing to consecrate with solemn joy the eve of his expected baptism, by resorting to the church and seeking admission as a true penitent, even to the outer-courts of the Lord’s

sanctuary, he had other uses for sacred time, and very different engagements to absorb his attention. Very true, he had *thought* of riding over to Patrington Church, partly to worship God, and partly to hear the Doctor. But the weather was uncomfortably hot, the road long and dusty, the horses jaded with a week's labor ; and he himself felt an unusual shortness of breath after breakfast, and he must take care of himself, for "mercy is better than sacrifice." Besides, his farm and family needed special watching against tramps and sundry outlaws, who had lately committed depredations in the neighbourhood ; so that, all things considered, it seemed to Mr. Hardpan to be his bounden duty to remain at his post, and hallow the day by reading the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress.

Dr. Penrose thought otherwise. He glanced along the front pews, where strangers were sure to be seated by the courteous warden, and none but familiar faces met his eyes. A sigh more than once escaped from him during the solemnities of the service, as he thought of one by whom the Lord's day was apparently so little honoured ; and how the sacred hours of the festival were lost to him, even as a time of spiritual preparation for his baptism. Then the Doctor thought of the incongruities between Hardpan's pious wishes and his doubtful conduct ; for, on the morrow, the pastor would be expected to sign this man's brow "with the sign of the cross," unseen of men ; to-morrow, *not* "before

many witnesses," but in all the shame of privacy, he whose feet do *not* "stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem," desires and expects to be named "Christ's faithful soldier and servant," to be received "into the congregation of Christ's flock," and will doubtless persuade himself that he is ready "to fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil."

Monday came—the day on which the aspiring farmer was to see the issue of his application. The morning sun was already high, and his rays were beautifully illuminating a colored transparency of the choir of Winchester cathedral, hanging in Dr. Penrose's study-window. It was not an ordinary "shade," but a richly executed painting—the perspective, the coloring, and the management of light and shade, all perfect and harmonious. "It is surely most strange," murmured the Doctor, "that the Christians of the 'dark ages' should have had such noble and almost super-human conceptions of the honor due to God, as to have designed and raised up these glorious sanctuaries, as a tribute to His love and greatness." But, while he was studying this problem, his attention was drawn off by a light tap at the door; and, a moment after, one of his vestrymen entered the room, accompanied by the personage whose arrival had been expected. The vestryman, to whom Mr. Hardpan had given some hint of his purpose, retired after a few minutes' conversation, leaving the Doctor alone with his visitor.

Dr. Penrose had quite naturally drawn, in his own mind, a rough and not very attractive picture of the candidate for private baptism. But, to his surprise and gratification, he now found that the man himself corresponded in hardly any respect with the notion he had prematurely formed of him. Robust, manly, with a fine eye, a thoughtful brow, and the calm sedateness of one whose gray locks seemed to mark him as just beyond the meridian of life, he sat before the Doctor, evidently weighing in his mind the various modes of approaching the topic which, before all others, was to be the subject of the interview.

Mr. Hardpan was in a new position, and he felt it. There was a kind of dignity and easy authority in Dr. Penrose's manner which was different altogether from anything which Hardpan had observed in the "preachers" with whom he had been conversant. There was nothing in it of assumption and self-importance ; for, if any such qualities had appeared in the Doctor, the visitor would not have been awed in the least, as he knew very well how to make an effectual use of the *lex talionis*. On the part of Dr. Penrose, the simple consciousness of being in possession of a Divine commission to minister in holy things was enough to give character to his life and habits, and to impress others with a feeling of the reality of his authority. It had some effect on Mr. Hardpan himself at first ; and his conduct at the opening of the interview was as respectful as could be desired.

"I suppose, Sir," said he, after some general conversation, "I suppose, Sir, that we may as well come to business at once; for, as I told you in my letter, I want to join your Church."

"I understand your intention," said the Doctor; "and I trust that the very serious step you propose to take has been carefully and deliberately considered."

"As to that," replied Hardpan, "I think it's all right, Sir. Oh, the goodness of God is great! I know that I've been an awful sinner. I've been a thoughtless creature in my time, Sir. But the Lord has had pity on me, and pardoned me. Though I was once a grievous worldling, yet, God be praised, I've found mercy, and I feel sure that all my sins are washed away;" and here Mr. Hardpan, unable to proceed, concealed his face in his hands, and actually burst into tears.

Dr. Penrose, who had been listening with all attention, was quite overcome with surprise to see the strong man thus bowed down under the pressure of feeling. It was certainly an unusual scene, and seemed to bear witness to the truth of Hardpan's words. Already the Doctor began to rebuke himself for the distrust he had entertained, and to form a most favorable judgment of one who, as yet, showed no symptoms whatever of the self-sufficiency which appeared so offensively in almost every line of the letter which he had penned.

A few minutes passed before the visitor recovered

his calmness, during which the Rector took occasion to throw in a few friendly and encouraging remarks; and then Hardpan went on to say, "Sir, you'll pardon my weakness, I hope. My feelings get so excited when I think of God's great love to me, an unworthy sinner, that I can't keep 'em down. What I was saying just now fetched my mind round to the time when I was *converted*, and it overcame me. I never know'd what religion was before; but then it came all at once, and filled me quite full of joy and peace." And so Mr. Hardpan went on for several minutes,—the Doctor's interest naturally increasing as he proceeded; for nothing could well exceed the apparent simplicity and earnestness of the visitor's replies to some questions here proposed to him, in order to obtain a more definite idea of the doctrinal views he had adopted. The homely and blunt style in which he expressed himself, Dr. Penrose was too much in earnest and too wise to care for. Indeed, it seemed now to lose much of its offensiveness, and to stand as an evidence of Hardpan's honesty and unaffected sincerity, and of his desire rather to give satisfaction respecting his motives than to make out a case, and seek to exalt himself by a display of fine words and glittering thoughts, at the most unsuitable of all times, and at the risk of being detected in spite of all the disguise.

But Mr. Hardpan had still more to say. After a pause, during which there was an effort to drive off some degree of conscious embarrassment, mingled

with that indescribable hesitancy of manner and irregularity of breathing, which often accompany intense and exciting thoughtfulness, he prepared to give a more detailed statement on a point which he had now fairly approached.

Drawing his chair a little closer to Dr. Penrose, and looking very inquiringly and with an air of wonderful simplicity in his face, he said, "May be you would like to hear me tell how the Lord in His mercy converted me?"

"Go on, my friend," said the Doctor, "and you may be very sure of my attention."

"Well, then, it was on the 17th of December, last year, just after the gale in which my brother Ephraim's schooner was driv ashore near Cape Hornblende. I heard about the wreck, but didn't know who it belonged to. The Cape was about 15 or 20 miles from Fairgrove, (that's the name of my farm;) and as there was a camp-meeting near there, I made up my mind to go there, and hear the news, and see what was going on. I needn't take up time, Sir, in telling about the crowds of people, and the preaching and singing. Everybody knows all about that. But the gist of the matter was this. There was one of the preachers who laid on so earnestly that I couldn't help listening to him. He was exhorting people to give up their sins at once, and make their salvation sure before it was too late. As near as I can recollect, he said, 'Some of you are making, at this moment, the worst of all experiments. You

are doubting whether God's promises and threatenings are true; and you are waiting till *death* comes to decide the question for you. But if the Bible proves true, then, as soon as you open your eyes in eternity, you will find that you have lost all. Soul and body are both doomed to ruin, and you can never return to life in order to make up what you have lost by this fatal experiment. And that the word of God *will prove true*, is proclaimed by a thousand evidences both inside and outside of you. Oh, tempt not the Almighty, but remember!—’ And, Sir, the word ‘remember’ was hardly out of his mouth, when there was a sudden noise and disturbance in the meeting, and somebody called out that a man had fallen down in a fit. There happened to be a doctor on the platform, sitting near the preacher; and he ran down, and told the people to take the man out of the crowd, and give him fresh air outside. Some of the stoutest of them picked up the man, and did as the doctor told ’em. But it was of no use; for in a minute or two the word was, ‘He’s *dead*; he’s *dead*;’ and soon it echoed all through the tent, and out into the woods. I elbowed my way as well as I could, till I got into a shed, and close up to the bench on which they had laid the man. And then, —O Sir, how shall I tell you? I sunk down on my knees as if I’d been thunderstruck; for it was my brother Ephraim’s corpse that laid before me.”

The rest of the story was briefly this. Ephraim had escaped from the wreck, with many bruises,

after a hard struggle for life ; and, in a state of great exhaustion, had managed to reach a neighbouring farm-house. A day or two after, he had imprudently walked from this retreat to the camp-meeting, had over-taxed his strength, and brought on a sudden prostration from which there was no recovery.

The reader may well imagine that the sympathies of Dr. Penrose were not a little touched by the strange story of his visitor, and also by the deep emotion manifested by Hardpan when he had proceeded thus far. Some considerable time passed before Hardpan was able to relate in connected language that part of the narrative which the Doctor would be most impatient to hear, embracing, as he assured him it did, his complete "conversion" and "change of heart." The substance of it was, that the warning given by the preacher, so suddenly enforced by the calamity just mentioned, made a deep impression on his mind ; that all his sins appeared to confront him ; that, at last, the light of the Divine favor burst into his mind, relieving him from the burden of his guilt, transforming him into a new creature, and inflaming his whole soul with such desires as the Psalmist expressed when he exclaimed, " Whom have I in heaven but Thee ! and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee ! "

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To all this,—to every word and every turn of thought,—Dr. Penrose listened with profound at-

tention, generously giving credit to his visitor for unbounded sincerity, and for purity of motive quite equal to the demands of the narrative. Still, ardent, affectionate, and benevolently indulgent as were the Doctor's feelings, it is but right to say that he was not quite satisfied, when, after hearing all that his friend had to say, he took a general review of the facts and opinions he could gather, compared them with the language of the strange letter in his possession, and endeavoured to obtain a clear view of the whole case. He could not, for instance, reconcile Mr. Hardpan's apparent earnestness and knowledge of a Christian's duty, with the glaring fact that so long a period as eight months had been permitted to elapse before he had sought the blessings of holy baptism, or manifested much eagerness to approach the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Hardpan had been wandering about as a sheep without a shepherd ; and now, for the first time, he had concluded to enter the fold. It could not well be doubted that he possessed religious feelings, and had embraced several prominent articles of the Christian faith. But yet there was a certain vagueness and a peculiar mannerism in the statement of his conversion and "experience," which forcibly brought to mind the language of the revival school or the "anxious seat," and gave rise to some fear on the part of Dr. Penrose, that he had before him one of those Christians in the abstract, who are too apt to repose on mere trust and feeling, to the neglect of prompt, self-denying and childlike obedience.

It was a painful thought—deeply so to the delicate sensibility of the Doctor's heart,—and especially so amid the circumstances of a case in which its entry seemed so like an unamiable intrusion. But enquiry could not here be waived without a trespass of conscience or violation of duty. There was a mystery, at least, about Mr. Hardpan's course, which needed to be cleared up. On what basis did his religion rest? Of what elements was his hope of salvation formed? In what way were his strong feelings to be consistently reconciled with his neglect of the Christian Church and Sacraments? Was he trusting his soul on the saving virtue of a single act of faith? Was he relying with dangerous confidence on the favorable issue in eternity of a sudden conversion? Had he rooted himself on the persuasion that God thinks lightly of the sins of His chosen? Had he any true conceptions of the nature of "the mystical body of Christ," and of the offices and powers of the sacred Ministry? Did he now desire baptism as the mere form of initiation to the privileges of a voluntary religious body? Did he hold the Church to be indeed the mighty and glorious army of the Redeemer, or simply a sect among sects, framed and upheld in its visible form by men, whose breath is in their nostrils? These and such like were the questions which darted across the apprehensive mind of Dr. Penrose, as soon as he began to reflect on the tone of Hardpan's statement, and his long delay in seeking the tender care of "the

mother of us all." Whether they could be satisfactorily answered, he knew not. Perhaps a word might explain the whole ; or the case might prove less formidable than it seemed. But it carried, nevertheless, an unpleasant aspect. It afforded scope for doubts ; and with the doubts came suspicions and anxieties, overshadowed with a frowning presentiment of evil.

No further progress, of course, could be made, till the Doctor's scruples were removed ; and accordingly, he determined to obtain, if practicable, a full conviction of their groundlessness, and that too, without a moment's delay.

Addressing Mr. Hardpan with great seriousness of manner the Doctor began. " My worthy friend, a narrative such as you have now favored me with, cannot be heard by a Minister of Christ without exciting very high and grateful thoughts respecting the mercy of Him ' who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' I have listened with close attention to the assurances you have given me of your serious repentance, your faith in the Redeemer, and of your convictions that through his love and merits you have received the pardon of your sins, and been inspired with a firm hope of eternal salvation. Permit me, however, to enquire, how have you employed the many months which have intervened between the time when, as you say, you were ' born again,'

and the present period, in which you are desirous of receiving Christian baptism ? ”

With some uneasiness and hesitation, and a sudden change (which Dr. Penrose noticed) in the expression of his eye, he answered : “ Well, Sir ; that’s rather a close sort of question for you to ask ; but I’m not ashamed to say that I have endeavoured to walk worthy, and to keep up a good hope. God knows we *all* have short-comings. I dare say you have felt it *yourself* many a time. But, on the whole, we are going on Zion-ward ; that’s a comfort, and we shan’t be left to ourselves.”

“ You have probably sought in the holy Scriptures ” said the Doctor, “ especially in the New Testament, some directions relative to the course of obedience which a disciple of the Redeemer ought to pursue.”

“ Of course I have, Sir ; and I guess you’d believe that I know how to search the Scriptures, if you were to see how many notes and explanations I have made on the blank leaves and margins of my family Bible, especially on Paul’s Epistles.”

“ I may seem, perhaps, a little particular, my good sir,” continued the Rector ; “ but, for my own satisfaction as a Minister of Christ, I cannot avoid asking, How have you passed your time on the numerous Sundays, at least, which have invited you to the public worship of God; since the period of your conversion ? ”

“ As to that, Sir ” he answered, with some anima-

tion and a little tartness, "I can very soon satisfy your curiosity, if you want to know. You see"—

"I beg of you" interrupted the Rector, "not to think that mere *curiosity* led me to ask such a question. Far from it. If you will but reflect on the sacredness of the relation which I am to maintain towards you as your pastor and spiritual guide, I think you will hardly fail to discover my true motive in making the enquiry."

"Well," said he, "it's very likely you meant no harm in touchin' me kind o' close, and I don't care if I tell you; though it isn't everybody's business,—that's a fact. As soon, Sir, as I got home again after Ephraim's funeral, and the better sort of people found out that I had become pious, I thought that I ought to set a good example to the rest of them by keeping the Sabbath-day holy. So I went at first to the old Dutch church at the Corners, with Jacob Frost and some other neighbours. But I soon got tired of the sort of doctrine the Domine held forth,—he's an old humdrum, besides,—and so I concluded on the whole that I wouldn't jine them. Well, you see, there's a Presbyterian meeting on the turnpike, about two miles this side of my farm; and I went there to hear preaching through the best part of the winter; and if they hadn't kept up such a steady ding-dong about Calvin's pints every Sabbath, I don't know but I should have cast in my lot with them; for I liked their ways well enough, and got considerably in with the people, *some* of whom, I think, are

Christians, after all. The next place I tried was the Union meeting, near the bark-mill on Sycamore Creek. It was called the 'Union' because the Baptists and Covenanters built it to use between them; the one kind to hold forth in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. Well, I heard them both, over and over again. But I was no better off; for they kept up such a bothering for and against baptizing babies and sousing grown-up people in the water, and all that sort o' thing, that I was completely worried out, and longed to hear somebody preach the real Gospel. Now, what could I do, when I was hampered at this rate, but stay at home and read the Bible? The ministers didn't preach the truth; and some of them harped away against free-will, as if every man in this free country was a stock or a stone. You'd have thought from what they said, that God made millions and millions of men, just for the purpose of telling 'em to do something that they *couldn't* do, and then condemning them for not doing it. I hope you don't preach such doctrine in the Episcopalian Church, do you?"

"By no means," answered Dr. Penrose, "for, in that case, the sermon would be completely contradicted and refuted by the Prayer-book."

"Well, so I thought; and that's the reason why I wish to join you."

"But you must allow me to ask whether that is your *only* reason?"

"I can't say that it is, exactly. There's some-

thing, you know, in the sort o' company a body keeps. Now a good many of the people in my neighbourhood are so self-righteous that I am really afeard of getting spoilt by mixing among them ; and the rest are so awfully bigoted and ignorant, that I've never been able to bring 'em over to the truth ; and so there's no use in talking with them or trying to make them better. But I've heard say that the Episcopals are more liberal, and don't persecute. I'm a great friend, Sir, of liberty of conscience ; and if the love of God has been shed abroad in the hearts of your congregation, I'm sure they'll see things *just as I do* ; and if that's so, I don't see why we mayn't have joy and comfort in each other."

"I am sorry, my dear sir, that you cannot name some more substantial reasons than these for your favorable opinion of the Church."

"Well, as to that," said Hardpan, thrusting up his spectacles to the top of his forehead, "as to *that*, I've made up my mind that your Church is about as near right as any denomination I know of. I hope that's enough, without going into particulars, which are neither here nor there." And, having thus disposed of the matter so logically, he looked at Dr. Penrose, as if excessively wounded by the cool ingratitude which that gentleman seemed to manifest, considering that such very handsome concessions had been made in regard to the comparative merits of the Church.

But the Doctor had not yet done ; for, in his

opinion, enough had *not* been said. " You spoke, Sir, just now," said he, " of the *bigotry* you had met with among the religious societies of your neighbourhood. May it not be possible that you have used this very offensive word where you should rather have said *consistency* or *firmness* in adhering to their respective systems of doctrine ? "

" But their doctrines, I tell you, ain't right and according to Scripter."

" Very likely they would affirm the contrary, and ascribe to *you* as much error as you impute to *them*."

" They can't do it ; for I take my views right straight out of the Bible."

" Perhaps they think that they do the same."

" No they don't, because they *can't*. The Bible's right agen them ; and they needn't stick up and be conceited as they are."

" Well, Sir, waiving that point for the present," said the Doctor, " I only ask whether it would not be better for you to use the term ' *bigotry* ' with a little more consideration for the opinions and feelings of those to whom you apply it ? "

" Upon my word as an honest man, I can't see what you are driving at."

" I have made this enquiry," continued Dr. Penrose, very mildly, " under some fear that you will charge the *Church itself* with the same crime, when you find that your own religious opinions, so far as they may be erroneous, must give way to her authorized teaching, and " —

"What's that you say?" demanded Hardpan, who sat exceedingly erect, as if he had been treated very unceremoniously, and expected to be insulted.

"I am only afraid," resumed the Doctor, "that you will think the *Church* somewhat 'bigoted,' when you find that her teaching is to control your private opinion, in some measure,—that the liberty you appear to prize so much will be limited by a definite standard of faith which you must embrace; by an established system of public worship in which you must unite; by certain views of Apostolic order, and by a code of disciplinary regulations,—to all which the concurrence and submission of every member of the Church is required, from the Bishops or chief pastors, down to the humblest of the laity."

"Good gracious!" said the candidate for baptism, in undisguised amazement. "Do you expect to tie and hamper, after this fashion, the liberty of a man who has been set free? Sir, I've got the love of God in my heart, and I know it. I feel it; I give you my word for it. I'm a converted man, if there ever was one. That's all you can ask; and I don't care a brass button-top for all the beggarly elements and forms of any sect or *Church* from Passamaquoddy Bay to Cape Horn."

"My good sir," said the Doctor, "let me entreat you to be calm. Your wish, it has been supposed, is to receive Christian baptism."

"I know that without you telling on it. What next?"

" You have applied for baptism to one who is authorized, by virtue of a commission from Christ, to administer that holy Sacrament."

" That's just as it happens. Maybe so, and maybe not. Humph ! "

" And by receiving baptism," continued the Rector, " you will be made a member, not of a sect, but of that sacred body which bears the name of the ' One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church ; ' for at the time when you are baptized, this proclamation will be made ;— ' We receive this person into the Congregation of Christ's flock ; ' and you will have publicly renounced ' the devil and all his works,' declared your belief in all the Articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed, and promised to ' keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life.' Have you thought of all this, and weighed well the responsibility, the dignity, and the gracious privileges to which you are thus to be advanced, as a ' member incorporate of the body of Christ ? ' "

A storm was evidently gathering its forces while the Rector was uttering these words with all proper distinctness and solemnity; for Mr. Hardpan became very uneasy, and could not avoid betraying, by unmistakable signs, the agitation of his mind. For a moment or two there was a dead silence,—Hardpan seeming bewildered. Then, moving his chair along till he had brought himself directly in front of his patient examiner,—knee to knee,—he bent for-

ward, gazed in the Doctor's face with a most unamiable and sarcastic expression, slowly and pompously raised his arm and quivering finger breast-high, and said, in an excited and somewhat threatening tone of voice, "Aha, Sir! I understand now what you are at ; but I ain't such a fool as you think I am. And now, I have just one question to ask *you*, Sir ; and I'll tell you plainly beforehand that a great deal depends on the answer I get. Mind me, Sir ! Come right up to the question, and don't think how you can dodge round it ; for I'm in *earnest* ; I'm in *earnest*, Sir ! Do you hear me ?" And, saying this, he struck the spacious palm of his hand with violence on the expanse of his right knee, as if to show that he had arrived at a pitch of determination which *must* command respect.

Dr. Penrose could not possibly imagine what the man was about. But he thought it the wiser course to say nothing, till he had learned the worst, and obtained some glimmering idea of the fate that awaited him. Hardpan then went on to propound his question, with as much solemnity and deliberation as if the destiny of an empire was to be settled by the reply. Almost choking with rage, and pale as a spectre, he stammered out :—" Do—you—believe,—really—believe—as old Bishop What's-his-name—the bigot—said *he* did,—that no man—can be a lawful Minister—without—being ordained by a *Bishop* ?"

The good Doctor, infinitely relieved on finding

that this was all, and that the mountains were not likely to be rent in twain, answered, at once ;—“*Most unquestionably, Sir.* I should no more think of ‘dodging,’ as you call it, such an enquiry, than I would dodge any other involving a scriptural fact, supported by the testimony of the Church for eighteen centuries, and never denied by any considerable body of men, even among the most virulent of the old sects and heresies.”

Hardpan was on his feet in a moment, and fairly shouted,—with the emphasis, the air, and the victorious look of one who is about to wither and annihilate an opponent—“Then you may rely upon it, Sir, that *you've done for yourself* now; for, as sure as my name's Reuben Hardpan, I'll never be baptized by you or your likes,—never—*never*,—even if I was going to give up the ghost right away! And so you may make yourself easy about *me*, Sir; for the sun will rise in the West before I consent to jine such a Church as *yourn!*” And after this violent explosion, he folded up his spectacles, seized his hat and carriage-whip,—made the best of his way to the door, without noticing the Doctor, and was about to depart in a fit of magnificent disdain.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PRIEST AND THE NEOPHYTE—CONCLUDED.

BUT the interview was not to be so abruptly broken off; for, as Hardpan's "religion" had demonstrably left the old Adam in full possession of his tongue and temper, there was some danger that this old "infection of nature" might, in the existing posture of affairs, work some mischief to the Doctor, among people outside, if Hardpan were allowed to proclaim in the village (as he probably would,) the issue of an unfinished controversy, and that too in his own version of it. The Doctor, therefore, under the urgency of these thoughts, and with a determination also to bring his visitor to a better mind, (if practicable,) went quietly to the door, turned the key, and then said:—"Mr. Hardpan, before we part, I should be pleased to receive from you such explanations of your conduct as will atone, in some measure, for your violation of the sanctity of a Clergyman's house, and for the fierce and unholy language in which you have dared to assail God's own Church. Will you have the politeness, then, to inform me by what unfortunate accident I have provoked you to the exhibition of feelings so irrec-

oncileable with those which marked the opening of our conference?"

"I've told you my mind already," said Hardpan. "You know now what *I* am, and I know what *you* are. When we began our talk, I didn't know you as I do now, or I'll be hanged if I'd have taken so much trouble as I did to tell you about my conversion. You're not the sort of man to teach *me*, Sir; for you're a bigot,—about the stiffest bigot that I ever set eyes on. God help you!"

"But, Mr. Hardpan, why do you think me such? If *I* am to be called a bigot because I differ from *you*, are not *you* equally entitled to the epithet for differing from *me*? And yet I should be very sorry to apply to you so opprobrious a term, though you have expressed opinions which many would consider highly intolerant and acrimonious."

"You have said quite enough," he answered, "to satisfy me that the root of the matter isn't in you. Oh that the Lord would give you a new sperrit, and open your eyes to see what an uncharitable soul you have! Don't talk to me any more about your Church, and Bishops, and all that. I believe this—*this*,—Sir,—that it's gifts and piety that makes a Minister; and, I tell you, I'd as lief be baptized by one of the preachers at Sycamore Creek, as by you, or your hoity-toity Bishop; because I think any one of them has just as good a right to do it as you have."

"Sir," said Dr. Penrose, with dignified seriousness,

"if you were a member of my flock I should feel justified in rebuking you sharply for this most unprovoked assault, and for the harsh language in which you have taken the liberty to express your mind. As it is, I will only inform you that the Gospel, as the Church understands it, gives no man the privilege of dispensing with the courtesy usually expected in a *gentleman*. And we are also accustomed to teach that some respect is due to the clerical office, even if it should be nothing more than the refraining of the tongue from that kind of language which, even among men of the world, would be ranked under the head of *insolence*."

"My sakes ! pretty plain talk, I think, to a man of my years," said our irascible nabob. "But I understand you, Sir ; I understand you. And, take my word for it, these high-flying notions about your Church won't go down in this free and independent nation. People won't stand it, Sir,—mind, *that*. I can see which way the wind blows as well as you can. Fat Bishops and lazy parsons,—that's it. You are all as proud as popes about your Apostolic Succession, as you call it ; just as if the *Lord* didn't make Ministers for us, without asking leave of your Bishops."

"I grant you," replied the Rector (saying nothing to all this abuse), "that the Lord alone has power and authority to send laborers into his vineyard. But how are you to distinguish those who are sent and commissioned by Him, from others who act *without* being sent, or contrive in some way to send each other ?"

“I know them, Sir, by their works. Souls are converted; and this proves that they are God’s Ministers.”

“But you must surely be aware that *all* who are instrumental in doing good are not invested with the authority of the ministerial office. Pious *women*, for instance, have often been the agents by whom Divine truth has been brought to the ears of the impenitent, and with the most salutary effect; but this was no proof that they were in *holy Orders*. Laymen of all classes—influential speakers, accomplished writers, editors of religious papers, and even men of very humble capacities, who have yet been able ‘to speak a word in season,’ have frequently been the means of arresting men in their career of sin, and leading them to the cross of Christ. I have even heard of an *infidel* who preached in sport to his associates, and found their eyes and his own streaming with penitential tears. But it does not follow that all these persons were in the sacred Ministry. Your assertion, therefore, proves entirely too much, and refutes itself.”

To this absolute settlement of the question Hardpan found himself, for a few moments, incompetent to frame a reply. But soon, recovering himself, and assuming a look of extreme surprise, as if a very artful trick had been played on his boundless honesty, he raised his eyebrows, and in a high falsetto voice, said: “Bless my heart, Sir! do you expect to come round me in this way, like a sneaking Jesuit?

I tell you, the *gospel's* the gospel, Bishop or no Bishop."

"Very true," rejoined the Doctor, not at all alarmed; "but I am inclined to think, that, had it not been for the Bishops, neither you nor I would ever have heard of the Gospel."

"You're wrong there, again; for, whether we have the Church or not, we've got the Bible, Sir,—the blessed Bible."

"And," said the Rector, "you may thank the Church for giving it you."

"But can't you see what hundreds of souls are converted by preachers who don't belong to your Church; and how Paul said he rejoiced when he heard tell of some who preached Christ even of contention?"

"That, of course, is not denied; but you must take care, Mr. Hardpan, lest you fall into the error of ascribing to men the good influences which emanate only from the truth they happen sometimes to proclaim."

"I don't intend to do that," replied the visitor; "but I see no odds whether I come to Church at Patrington to hear *you* preach, or sit under some other Minister four or five miles nearer home, if he holds forth the real Gospel."

"You forget that you have already confessed your dissatisfaction with such exhibitions of the Gospel as *they* gave, and your preference for the purer faith of the Church," rejoined the Doctor. "And as to

the other point, constituting the difficulty on which you so much dwell, I offered a sufficient answer, just now, in very few words. But you met it with mere ridicule, instead of receiving it candidly. I appealed simply to your reason and good sense, without any attempt to ‘come round you like a Jesuit.’ But as you still seem unconvinced, and disposed to overlook the difference between a Divinely authorized and a self-created Ministry, and to rest everything on the question of apparent success or usefulness, I must beg your attention a little longer; for I would not lose the opportunity of removing from your mind an error by which many have been deluded.”

“You can go on, Sir, if you have a mind to,” said Mr. Hardpan; “but if you think to change my opinion, I guess you’ll be mistaken. Mind that.”

“The reason, then,” resumed the Doctor, whose patience was almost inexhaustible,—“the reason why success attends the preaching of the Gospel by those who are not sent, is simply this, ‘The word of God is not bound.’ No man can absolutely *prevent* the operation of Divine truth on any other mind than his own. Of such truth especially may we say, ‘It is mighty, and will prevail.’ Revelation is a voice proceeding from the throne of God,—a voice which *will* be heard, and must accomplish the thing for which it is sent. And, therefore, from whose mouthsoever it is heard,—so it *be* the pure truth of God,—it will bear the mighty influence which Heaven has conferred upon it.”

"As sure as fate! I'm glad to hear you speak the truth, for once at any rate. You're coming round, after all, as I thought you would. So, go ahead!" interrupted Hardpan, thinking that Dr. Penrose had committed himself, or was bending very decidedly toward the "liberal" side of the argument.

But the Doctor went on, without noticing his visitor's premature shout of triumph. "Why should it not be so?" he asked. "Do we—mere *men*—give power to the Divine revelation we proclaim? Is God's sacred word made effectual or ineffectual, at our will and pleasure? Or is it not, rather, true, that even 'Paul,' one of the greatest Apostles, 'may plant,' and 'Apollos,' an eloquent man and mighty in the Scripture 'may water,' while it is God only 'who giveth the increase?' And yet, how great a marvel is sometimes made of the fact that good effects flow from the preaching of those whom we believe to possess no authority from the Lord Jesus to minister in holy things. But where is the wonder? Will the world never learn that it is God's word which saves the soul, and not the earthen vessels in which it is contained? Will men never come to understand that Divine truth may have effect on the human heart, though spoken by any man, woman, or child, by clergy or laity, by friend or foe, by those who have pure motives in proclaiming it, and by those who do not profess Christ at all, but wickedly sit in the seat of the scorner?"

"Stop a minute, and stick a pin there," exclaimed

Hardpan, impatiently, and with a most radiant face. "Why, don't you see that's just what I've been saying all along? One minister's tongue is as good as another's, and that too by your own confession. No matter what they're called, so they preach the Gospel. And then, I ask you, and I defy you to get round it, what advantage have you Episcopals over other people? And what use is there in Bishops and their ordination?"

"To this, I make answer," replied the Doctor, without pausing a moment, "by applying the words of an Apostle,—'Much every way; chiefly because *unto them were committed the oracles of God.*' The Gospel is truly 'the power of God unto salvation'; but this is only in so far as it *is* the pure Gospel; for if it should degenerate into 'another gospel,' there is no promise of such happy results. How then was it to be preserved pure? Did God interpose for this object? Undoubtedly. If revelation had been committed to the keeping of men at large, it would soon have been lost, or mingled inseparably with human tradition. But God gave His word to the *Church*, and raised up an order of men, and anointed them with the Holy Ghost, and promised to be with them and their successors to the end of the world,—men who were to carry down the true faith, or (in your own words,) the 'real Gospel,' to all future generations; and by them the word was to be spoken in love, but still with a peculiar degree of authority also, inasmuch as they were *Christ's*

*authorized ambassadors,—His agents on earth to teach, to rule, to admonish, to dispense the holy Sacraments, and to do all such things as were needful for the edifying of his sacred body, the Church.* To them He said, ‘Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ But He committed these awful powers and privileges to none besides the Apostles and those following in their line. These were to act ‘in Christ’s stead,’ and to exercise ‘the ministry of reconciliation,’ to ‘hold forth the word of life,’ to be ‘the salt of the earth,’ ‘the light of the world,’ the ‘overseers’ of God’s heritage, the stars on the mystical candlesticks, the ‘angels of the Churches,’ and the men who, though possibly poor and despised, were invested with Heaven’s own authority to fulfil His high commission,—‘Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ The preaching of the Gospel was thus not the *whole*, but only *one part* of their duty. But it is sufficient now to say that they were to bear forward the torch which was to kindle light in all the world. If the Church were not thus the ‘Witness and Keeper’ of Holy Writ, how soon would the blessed Gospel perish from off the earth !”

“And so it’s your notion, I suppose, that, if it

hadn't been for the Church, as you understand it, we should have had no real Gospel?"

"Certainly. And if the Church in all its branches were now suddenly destroyed, Christianity would soon become extinct."

"I don't believe any such thing; for even a bat might see that if all the Episcopals were gone, still the other denominations would keep it up."

"Just as long," said Dr. Penrose, "as floating planks would keep up anything in a storm, after the ship had sunk."

This was too much for Hardpan. Baffled and exposed at every turn he had taken, all that remained for him was to exclaim:—"Oh, the bigotry of the human heart, and the depth of Satan's delusions! Nothing but Church, and Bishops, and Priests, and all that, instead of Christ and a free salvation! When *will* the Lord raise up another Jonah, or somebody like Martin Luther, to shake up the nations, and smite the ten-horned beast! What will become"—

But he was abruptly checked in his harangue by the Rector, who with good reason began to be weary of dealing with a "convert" of so perverse and petulant a disposition. Suspecting at once what turned out eventually to be the truth of the case, he laid his hand gently on Hardpan's arm, and, with a look that struck even that contemptuous sinner to the heart, said, "My dear Sir, after such assertions as you have just made, permit me simply

to ask whether you have ever read the ‘Book of Common Prayer’?”

With some hesitancy and shame, the confession was drawn from him, at last, that he had *not*.

“Have you ever employed yourself in a diligent and devout study of such works as are intended to illustrate the Articles of the Christian Faith, as held and taught by the Church?”

“Why, as to that,” said he, with more confidence, “I told you before that I know the Bible, and have made notes on it. And I have dipped a good deal into Scott’s Commentary; besides reading a lot of things published by the different Tract Societies.”

“Have you read anything on the constitution and history of the blessed Redeemer’s Church and the nature of the Christian Ministry?”

“Well, I can’t say that I have, and my time’s too precious. I don’t think such reading amounts to much, if one’s any way spiritual-minded. But now I think of it, I *did* read a pamphlet or two against the new-fangled Popery, which you know, was fetched in by them Oxford men some years ago, and a pretty set they are. But what are you going to ask next?”

“I may trust, I suppose, that, as you came here with the express purpose of receiving baptism,” added Dr. Penrose, in the most searching tone, “and (as I understand,) you expect to be admitted to the holy Communion, you have, of course, diligently, deliberately, and in the fear of God, prepared your-

self for the previous rite of Confirmation ; and have applied yourself to an examination of the nature of the Christian Sacraments ; and have learned, in particular the great peril of the unworthy receiving of the holy Communion.”

To this Hardpan made answer :—“ I know enough about the thing to satisfy my conscience, at any rate ; for, if a man has vital piety, and his heart is in it, it doesn’t matter a great deal, after all, about these outward ordinances, though they’re well enough in their place, I suppose.”

“ I warn you, Sir,” was the Rector’s emphatic and earnest reply, “ to distrust anything under the name of *piety*, which encourages or tolerates a contempt of the most sacred institutions of the Lord Jesus Christ, before whom you and I must one day stand, to give an account, not only for the issue of this day’s conversation, but for the use or neglect of the gracious means He has afforded to help us on toward His heavenly kingdom. And I most seriously advise you to enter with deeper solemnity into an examination of your motives in thus presenting yourself for admission into the fold of Christ,—a fold of which you have confessed your ignorance, more than intimated your dislike, and avowed your determination not to submit to its teaching and discipline.”

“ That is to say,” said the indomitable Hardpan, “ I will not submit to the intolerance of *you priests*.”

"There is written, Sir," replied the Doctor, "in what you have well called the 'blessed Bible,' this plain command, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for souls as they that must give account.' We never go beyond this. And now let me say that it would be a happy thing for you, if you could reverently, and with the serious humility of a man whose life is on the wane, commit yourself to the kind maternal care of that Church, which the Redeemer bought with his own most precious blood. To aid you in approaching such a decision, I offer you my best services and prayers, if you judge them worth accepting. The use of the parish library and of my own, you shall gladly have; and there are not a few persons in my flock on whose brotherly-kindness, sympathy, advice, and love, I am sure you may safely count."

"Sir," said he, "you're very kind indeed, and considerably pathetic. I thank you for your offer, and I think there's some good in you, after all. It's likely too that you've said some things that you wouldn't have said if the Lord had given you more light. But it may be as well for you to know, once for all, that you've made a great mistake this time, and have lost your chance; for, mind this, *I am not the man to be caught!*" and, after the usual parting ceremonies, which the Doctor did not refuse him, he closed his first and last visit to the parsonage, with an expression of countenance between a scorn-

ful smile and a malicious frown, and was soon far on his way to Fairgrove.

Six months after this interview, Dr. Penrose accidentally learned that his intractable visitor had lost all hope of finding a Church where the "real Gospel" was preached, and perfect liberty of opinion allowed. As a last resort, he fitted up a spacious room in his house for Sunday services; and with a congregation formed of his own servants and neighbors, took the full benefit of his liberty in preaching a "gospel" of which no Apostle or Saint had ever heard. It was, therefore, a prudent thing on the part of Hardpan, to ridicule Apostolic Succession and ancient Creeds, as he did; for, if his own doctrine had to be proved by lineal descent from the beginning, its origin could be referred to no other than Judas Iscariot.

## CHAPTER X.

### FAITH, VIEWS, AND OPINIONS.

THESE three words, rightly understood, mean very different things; and the oversight of this distinction is one of the main causes of that cloudiness which has overspread much of the religious thought of the present age. *Faith* is a strong and vital principle resting on the eternal foundation of God's word, and therefore authoritative. *Views* are the impressions we derive from a survey of things, and may possibly have their issue in faith, or leave us in uncertainty. *Opinions* are floating and variable judgments arising from each man's own "views" of things, and having only such a degree of authority as he himself chooses to allow them.\*

\* For example; several men stand gazing at a church-spire. Each one thus takes his *view* of it, and then expresses his *opinion* as to its height. It is simply possible that some one of their opinions may be *right*; but it is far more probable that they are all *wrong*. They are merely guesses, conjectures, or judgments based upon nothing better than each man's ability to measure a given space by the eye alone. While they are gazing, the architect himself joins their company, and tells them authoritatively that the exact

In religion, faith always imposes *obligation*; while views and opinions may, or may not, enforce spiritual or moral action. Faith in Divine revelation compels and inclines me to lead a "godly, righteous and sober life;" but views and opinions concerning that revelation, being chiefly intellectual, do not necessarily bring me under the bonds of obedience. Faith, therefore, is one thing, and opinion quite another. Faith is the superior, divine, and fruitful principle; while opinion is inferior, human, and in itself, barren of spiritual fruit.

The evil results of this blending together of two or three different operations of the mind or soul, are everywhere seen. Within the Church, they are always distinct and separate; there is room and salutary exercise for both; and their respective domains will be stated and illustrated further on. But the point here to be emphasized is, that when the opinions, speculations, and theories, of fallible men, are made the test by which Divine truth is to be judged, it follows by necessity that the foundations of all right faith are undermined, and the supports of all right morality are subverted. For, if every man may rely on his own conceptions of Divine things as the ultimate test of revealed truth, then that truth must lose all *objective* and *authoritative* character; and,

height of the spire is so many feet and inches.' This settles the matter. The architect knows what he affirms; the observers take him at his word; and by this act of *faith* accept a fact of more value than any of their *opinions*.

under such a loss, it can no longer be the great enlightener and purifier of the human soul.\*

Nor is this all; for the question will here naturally arise, whether the name of "*religion*" can properly be given to that which does not bind a man to believe and do certain things on an authority *outside of himself*. No one, it may be supposed, will deny that a religion *without a God* is an absurdity, a mere pretension, a sham, a thing more illogical and monstrous than idolatry itself. But there is no substantial difference between this and a religion *with* a God, whose authority and words are only allowed to rule a man's belief and conduct so far as they may be consonant with that man's own independently formed *opinions*. For, those opinions, when traced to their root, will be found essentially *Atheistic*; because it is impossible to believe that such a Being as the All-wise GOD even *exists*, if we deny that His authority is supreme and final. A religion with a God thus dethroned is certainly not the religion of Christ, though it may sometimes be clothed with Scriptural phrases, and adorned with Script-

\* "To allow the liberty to dispute the fundamental doctrines which the Church Catholic has laid down, seems to us about as reasonable as if a teacher of plane astronomy were to allow his pupil to consider it an open question whether the sun moved round the earth or the earth round the sun; or to take an illustration from a higher branch of the same subject, if a treatise of physical astronomy should allow its readers to remain in doubt whether the theory of gravitation were true or false." (*Christian Remembrancer*, vol. II. 1868. p. 363.)

ural imagery. Strip it of these, and nothing remains but a bundle of fragmentary notions, glittering truisms, scraps of philosophy, and shreds of morality and sentiment,—a paltry reliance surely for the living, and a flaunting mockery for the dying.

By way of offset to all this, it is often pleaded that human minds are so variously constituted, so unequal in their development, and so influenced by their environment, as to render uniformity of belief impracticable, and even undesirable. It has been alleged that by the collision of many minds, the discovery of truth is facilitated; that sects and divisions are not only inevitable, but also useful in stimulating spiritual life and action; and that perfect agreement would find its issue in a stagnant Church.

But these positions are refuted not only by numerous facts of history and the experiences of every-day life, but also by their explicit and oft-repeated denial in holy Scripture. No one doubts that there always will be a great diversity among men in mental constitution, education, hereditary prepossessions, social surroundings, and exposure to various other-external influences. But to infer from this that no considerable number of men can *think alike* on things pertaining to the Christian Faith, is as absurd as to affirm that, for the same reasons, they must be unable to agree on anything else. We need to take only the merest glance at the world around us to see that men *can* and *do* agree on many things, in spite of all diversity in the quality

and working of their minds. For it is quite certain that there are many principles and facts in morals, philosophy, science, political economy, etc., about which the majority of civilized men *are* "of one mind and judgment." Millions of men in a kingdom or nation are inspired with the same patriotic feeling, and with the united devotion to their country's laws and institutions. The whole mass of people in a nation are content to use one and the same language, and to observe the same social customs. All over the world Masonic, and other cognate societies, maintain the same rule, and agree in the same principles and usages. And both Scripture and Christian antiquity are evidence that a similar unanimity is possible in religion. At this very hour there are points on which the hundreds of millions in the Catholic Church are in substantial agreement, such as the inspiration of the holy Scriptures, the Apostolic origin of the Episcopate, the Lord's Day, Baptism and the holy Eucharist, to say nothing of the essential doctrines and facts of the Gospel as summed up in the Catholic Creeds.

The opinion that men cannot think alike concerning religious truths is also at direct issue with holy Scripture, in which certain facts and doctrines are set forth as infallibly true, and therefore to be received by all men, without doubt or questioning. Our Lord's own words were these, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." *S. Mark xvi. 16.*;

in which declaration "believing" is not to be taken as a mere act of assent, but also a loyal and heart-felt reception of all that is revealed concerning our Lord's Person, mission and teaching. The Apostles also taught everywhere the same things; and all the baptized were pledged and bound, by the very fact of their baptism, to be "*of the same mind and the same judgment.*" Diversity of belief was inadmissible; and every symptom of it was sharply rebuked; because, as the original Revealer was Divine, so the things revealed, and everywhere taught in the Church, were absolute *truths*, and could in no sense be treated as speculative *opinions*. For this reason, no account was ever taken of the variety of men's judgments, prejudices, temperaments, and modes of thinking, when the positive truths of the Gospel were set before them for their acceptance or their rejection. Of course, great regard was had to the weakness and ignorance of many new converts, who needed instruction and patient catechizing even in first principles; but in no case was the truth of God emasculated or retrenched, to bring it into conformity with the narrowness of their intellectual capacities. Revelation, by its very nature, admitted of no capricious changes, modifications, abatements, or time-serving-glosses, either to meet the scruples of the philosopher or the stolidity of the rustic. There was only one Creed for all,—the same in substance throughout the world, and held without dispute by all the "faithful in Christ." When the great early

Councils were assembled, it was not their object to set forth new doctrine, but to define, express, confirm, and defend, *what had been everywhere believed from the beginning*. And thus, for long centuries, Creeds and Councils, Bishops and priests, and the whole company of the faithful, were united in the vindication of the same holy Faith, and in working together for the prevention, exposure, and extirpation of all contradictory or heretical opinions.

This simple fact, then, is a sufficient refutation of the modern notion that men *cannot think alike* on religious matters; for it shows that large bodies of men, as various as possible in mental traits, sympathies, educational bias, and religious predilections, *may*, through the power of the Divine Spirit and submission to authoritative teaching, be so impressed with the transcendent light of revealed truth, as to accept it most reverently “with one accord,” and be brought to confess that the sources of religious discord are *not in revelation itself*, but in *the large license and undisciplined use of the human reason and will*.

In answer to all this, it may be said, that there were probably in the ancient Church great diversities of opinion, which did not show themselves on the outer surface, but were freely tolerated, and even held to be lawful.

This is undoubtedly true; and it is here stated for the very purpose of showing, as distinctly as possible, *what it was* that the Church and the Bible required all men to believe, and *what it was* that

was left free as matter of opinion. The Church has always made a broad distinction between the fundamental truths of revelation, which every Christian is bound to believe, and those subordinate points which, not being asserted and clearly defined in holy Scripture, are therefore open to discussion and various shades of opinion. Much confusion has arisen even in the minds of sincere and faithful members of the Church, from the confounding together of these entirely different things. The Church requires uniformity of belief in those things which have been summarized in her orthodox Creeds. These are known as articles of the Christian *Faith*—the very essence and substance of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, outside of the Creeds and the doctrines implied in them, we enter that wide region in which numerous religious points, *not essential to salvation*, may be freely discussed and variously estimated by different minds—*provided* always, that the conclusions reached shall be in harmony with the fixed belief and fundamental principles of the Church. This is the region of what is called religious or theological *opinion*. And as opinion is, in its very nature, uncertain and changeable, it is therefore confined to subjects which are external to the positive and settled Faith of the Church. Among these subjects are predestination and grace, assurance of salvation, final perseverance, and numerous questions relating to the Sacraments, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the

elements and modes of Divine worship, etc. On many of these subordinate points, various shades of opinion will be found even among those who firmly and undoubtingly believe every article of the Christian Creeds; and, on the exercise of such opinions, the Church prefers rather to suggest and guide, than to interfere more directly, so long as the *Faith itself* is not endangered, or mutual charity sacrificed.

In matters of Faith, then, Christian men *may* be, and *should* be, "of the same mind." But in the inferior sphere of matters which the Church regards as non-essential, this oneness of thought has never been found practicable or necessary; and accordingly, it has never been exacted by the Church as a term of Communion.

Through an oversight of this important distinction between *Faith* and *Opinion*, the Church has been accused on the one hand of unyielding severity and exclusiveness, and on the other of too great laxity in point of doctrine. It is very certain, however, on the contrary side, that the growing dissensions of modern times are chiefly attributable to the sectarian error of blending together things which the Church has ever kept separate. It is owing to the error of incorporating into the Protestant Confessions of *Faith* many points fairly open to private *opinion*, and requiring belief in them, as if they were on the *same plane with the Church's Creeds*, that so many sects have arisen to disfigure, oppress, and distract the Christian world. The Church, on the con-

trary, requires from those coming to Baptism, no assent to any modern and changeable "Confession of Faith," but simply a belief in "all the articles of the Apostles' Creed," *i.e.*, the great fundamental verities of the Christian religion. The Nicene Creed comes afterwards as a part of Morning and Evening Prayer, but more properly of the Office for Holy Communion; but, at Baptism, Confirmation, and admission to Communion, all questions of doctrine on which the Church has not spoken positively, are left for diversity of judgment.

It is, however, sometimes asserted that, besides the Creeds, the Anglican Church has set forth the "Thirty-nine Articles," as an authoritative summary of the Faith; and that they are similar in origin, design, and use, to the "Confessions" of the various Protestant sects. This latter assertion, however, is an error; for the Articles, though including some few on matters of faith, are chiefly on minor subjects, and are not styled "Articles of *Faith*," but "Articles of *Religion*," implying inferiority to the Creeds of the Universal or Catholic Church. The Articles are not, in themselves, of fundamental importance, (except the first five), nor are they absolutely necessary in all times and places. For the Anglican Church was more than a *thousand years old* before the Articles were drawn up; and her existence as a branch of the Catholic Church is in no way dependent on their retention. They were framed in a time of long and perilous conflict with unbelief, disbelief,

and the distractions created by the animosity of Romanists on the one side, and of Protestants on the other. At such times a national Church may find it expedient to adopt extraordinary means, for her own defence under the pressure of unjust accusation, and for the preservation of peace and confidence among her own Clergy and people. Other branches of the Catholic Church (the Gallican, for instance,) have done the same in times of severe trial from within, or of dangerous intrusion from without. The Church of Rome, as an entire body, did substantially the same thing at the Council of Trent, and erred grievously in her mode of doing it, by adding to the settled *Creed* of the Church Catholic, twelve new articles, comprising decisions on matters which, *till then*, had been held simply as pious *opinions*. Not unlike this uncatholic proceeding of the Romish Church is the error of mingling truth and human opinions together in a Protestant "Confession of Faith," and then enforcing them as terms of Communion. The "Thirty-nine Articles" occupy a position entirely different from this. For, with the few exceptions just noted, they touch only on points of local, temporary, and supplementary character, and are open to revision or removal at the Church's pleasure.\* This is not the case, precisely,

\* "They [the Articles] are to the Creeds what the bye-laws of a society are to the legal and settled rules of that society." (*Dr. W. H. Mill, Introduction to Santa Clara on the Articles, by Rev. F. G. Lee, D. C. L.*)

with the Protestant Confessions. "If a Lutheran," says Dean Hook, "rejects the Lutheran Confession of Faith, or a Calvinist the Calvinistic system, the first ceases to be a Lutheran, and the second a Calvinist. The difference between these Confessions and the Thirty-nine Articles is apparent at once to those who pay attention to the subject. If Convocation were to reject the Thirty-nine Articles tomorrow, the Church of England would remain, as it has always been, a living body, having in that character as much right to reject the Thirty-nine Articles in the nineteenth century, as it had to enforce them in the sixteenth." (*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, Vol. IV., p. 327, note.) It is, in fact, by its Confession, platform, or scheme of doctrine and order, that one sect is distinguished from another; but the appeal of the *Church* is (as it was also at the Reformation), not to humanly devised articles, but to Holy Scripture, and the doctrine and polity of the primitive Church. It is also to be noted that the Thirty-nine Articles were not received in the *American Church* till after long consideration and debate in our early Conventions. In this, as in all other points, the Church adheres to the old rule:—"In things necessary, unity; in things doubtful, liberty; and in all things charity."

## CHAPTER XI.

### SECTARIAN FOUNDATIONS UNSCRIPTURAL.

WHEN the originators of the denominations of English derivation finally separated from the Church, and formed themselves into distinct communities, it became necessary to defend their position against the charge of *schism*, by some line of argument which, if not convincing to others, would be at least satisfactory and quieting to themselves. There were only two ways in which such a defence could be attempted; 1st, by pleading the necessity of the case; and 2d, by showing that, in all essential points, their communities were framed and ordered in conformity with holy Scripture, and were therefore true Churches of Christ.

The plea of “necessity” was grounded on the assumption that though the Anglican Church had freed herself from Papal usurpation, yet she still retained in her polity, rites and ceremonies, customs, and objects of reverence, so many of the corruptions of the Church of Rome, that her Ministry had lost its primitive simplicity, her worship was overlaid with abuses, her discipline had become unscriptural, and her spiritual life was so nearly extinct, as to

vitiate or annul her claim to be a true branch of the Church of Christ. Separation was therefore deemed justifiable, if not even obligatory.

The reply to all this is easy. It was the misfortune of the Puritans and the other separatists, that they had no clear idea of the Catholic Church, or of genuine Catholicity. In their view, Popish and Catholic were convertible terms; and therefore their theories of Church reform made no distinction between Papal errors and certain fundamental principles and hallowed usages which the Church had inherited from a primitive age, when Popery was unknown. Instead of enquiring "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God," whether this or that thing was, *in itself*, pure, primitive, and conducive to holiness, (though subject to abuse,) they judged everything by a standard devised by *themselves*,—a standard which, as time has proved, is destructive alike of truth and error.\* As

\* "Because Papists have made too much of some things, Protestants have made too little of them. The Papists treat man as all sense; and therefore, some Protestants would treat him as all spirit. Because one party has exalted the Virgin Mary to a divinity, the other can scarcely think of *that most highly favored among women* with common respect. The Papist puts the Apocrypha into his canon,—the Protestant will scarcely regard it as an ancient record. The Popish heresy of human merit in justification, drove Luther on the other side into most unwarrantable and unscriptural statements of that doctrine. The Papists consider grace as inseparable from the participation of the Sacraments,—the

the case stood, the Church of England had not denied any point of the Christain Faith, nor added to it any one article ; she had not led her people into "peril of idolatry," nor imposed any new and burdensome terms of communion ; nor had she retained in her worship and formularies anything which could justly be accounted "superstitious or ungodly." As, then, no such charges could be brought against the Church, it is manifest that separation was *not* a matter of "necessity," but simply an impatient, groundless, and ill-considered exercise of *private opinion*.

The defense of the separation was therefore thrown on *Scriptural* grounds ; and in this exercise the pens of the most able dissenting writers have been employed from the 16th century to the present time, with an earnestness equalled only by the magnitude of the subject.

In carrying on this work of defense, the separatists were not united even among themselves. On several points, (the Ministry, for instance,) there were important differences between the strict Presbyterians and the Independents, or Congregationalists ; the former holding to an Apostolic Succession of Presbyteries, while the latter contended that each congregation was a complete "church" in itself, and competent to choose and ordain its own Minister.

Protestants too often lose sight of them as instituted means of conveying grace." (*Remains of Rev. Richard Cecil [Evangelical]* p. 255.)

Independently of these differences, there was, (as just stated,) one fundamental principle on which all these parties acted; and on this particular point some observations may now be made, by way of testing its validity, and showing its natural and inevitable results.

The Protestant sects confidently asserted that their respective theories of the Church were derived from, and were in accordance with, *holy Scripture*; that from this source alone their several models of a Christian Church had been drawn; and that the "forms of government" which they had adopted were, (as nearly as could be,) such as existed when the Church was under Apostolic rule. By all these parties the appeal to *Scripture* was held to be the only true method of arriving at a complete and final settlement of the question.

Now, at the very first glance, under the light of existing facts, it is evident that this appeal to *Scripture* alone has not been successful. For, the rule, after a trial of three hundred years, has proved powerless in bringing all the parties to see and distinctly recognize that one visible Church of Christ of which the Apostles wrote, and in which all the faithful were united as one body, in the bonds of unity and concord. However highly the parties in question may extol the Bible as their "sole rule of faith and practice," and may imagine that they have re-produced the Church as there depicted, yet, in the issue, we find that each party claims the right of so

interpreting the rule as to bring it into accord with a theory already and independently formed,—a theory which thus takes the place of the rule, and annuls its obligation. In saying this, we do not impugn or question their reverence for holy Scripture ; but still that reverence did not hinder them from interpreting and applying it after a fashion of their own. In so doing, the error was mainly intellectual, though conscience was often led astray in the urgency of debate. No one will deny that the better part of the separatists feared God, and intended to serve Him with a new and purer devotion ; and, notwithstanding their errors, they clung to their God and Saviour with all the sternness of a Puritan's love. When, therefore, they finally cut themselves off from the old Apostolic Church, and under the stress of the times rallied together to devise some plan, by which they might live in brotherly fellowship, they *thought* that they had found in the Bible, just such a model of the Church as coincided with their own opinions and desires,—a Church pure and simple, without prelates or Bishops, without a priesthood, without a rich ceremonial, refined music, and symbolic ornamentation and vestments ; in short, without liturgies, holy-days, surplice, sign of the cross, or any other of those elements which they confounded with Popery or paganism. But, in consequence of divisions among themselves, each party soon had a “Church” of *its own*, agreeing in some points with the others, but also with differences suf-

ficiently serious to render communion and fellowship impracticable. This was simply the natural issue of their principles. If Scripture had been interpreted under the illumination cast upon it by the writers and historians of Apostolic and primitive times, the world would not now be wondering how there could be over a hundred "*Scriptural*" Churches, while our Lord and His Apostles knew only of *one*.

In this position of things, then, we are brought face to face, as it were, with two very curious and extraordinary facts, which are these, viz., 1st, that (on the sectarian theory,) any number or company of Christian men, holding opinions peculiar to themselves, may, on Scriptural grounds, renounce the authority of the existing, visible, or historical Church of which they are members, and form themselves into an independent organization, sect, or denomination, claiming the name, rights and prerogatives of a "Church," and asserting the possession of spiritual endowments, official powers, and pastoral authority, *equal in all respects to those of the original Church*. The 2d fact is this:—that *those same Scriptures utterly deny any such liberty of separation*, denouncing it as "carnal" and "sensual," and resisting even the earliest tendency to disunion as a sin deserving instant rebuke. In those Scriptures we read, in plainest terms, of the rise of a great kingdom or Church, long predicted by the prophets, founded by the Son of God Himself, and replenished with the richest gifts of the Holy Ghost,—a

kingdom visible, endued with power, and incapable of destruction. Into this kingdom or Church were to be gathered all, of every nation and tongue, who should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be made heirs of eternal life. And, of this Divine Institution, *unity* was a cardinal and fundamental law, never willingly to be broken. Its vast and far-reaching purposes, as God's own agency for the regeneration of the whole world, and the subduing of "sin, Satan, and death," were dependent for success on the conservation of its power under this bond of *unity*. And therefore, schism was always held to be equivalent to treason in the State, or mutiny in an army. It was a disorganizing principle, a foreign element thrown into the Church, to obstruct the work of God by the interference of human folly. Schism was an open resistance to the fulfilment of the Saviour's earnest prayer; and a dismemberment of His body, which is the Church. The whole burden of Scripture, as thoughtful sectarians themselves now confess, is condemnatory of all schisms, dissensions, discordant parties, and warring sects, classing them *not* among "the fruits of the Spirit," but in the dark catalogue of "the works of the flesh."

From this review of the case, it is clear that nothing can be more hopeless than an attempt to justify sectarianism by an appeal to the *holy Scriptures*.

On the contrary side, "the holy Catholic Church" has ever claimed, and now claims, that in those

holy Scriptures the vindication of her charter and title as the true Church of Christ, is complete and unanswerable. In no period of her long history has she ever lost consciousness of being that very same body which, in the sacred writings, bears the name of the "Church of the living God."

There is another point which may here be worth noticing: viz., that if the sectarian theory of the Church is *really* derived from the Scriptures, that theory will of necessity correspond in all essential respects with the form, constitution, faith, worship, and peculiar genius and instincts, of the existing Catholic Church. But the very contrary of this is the truth, as is clearly evinced, not only by the *existence* of sects, but by their unfriendliness towards that branch of the Catholic Church,—the Anglican and her American daughter,—even though that branch is at this day more vigorous in spiritual life and enterprise than any other, either Oriental or Roman. This is a demonstration that the sectarian idea of the Church is at variance with that of the Christians of the Apostolic age.

It is not a little remarkable that it should not have occurred to the founders of the Protestant sects, that, for the plainest of all reasons, the Apostolic Church itself was *not founded upon the written word of God*,—meaning, of course, the New Testament. For, at the time when the Church was founded, the New Testament *had not been written*. It is a simple fact that the Christian Church ex-

isted and flourished in a large portion of the world, for a number of years *before* the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles were penned. The Church was founded, and clothed with all its powers, on the day of Pentecost, and proceeded at once to "convert the nations, far and nigh," while as yet *neither Apostle nor Evangelist had written one line of their inspired books or letters*. The several writings now collected and bound together under the name of the "New Testament," were in fact chiefly narratives and epistles written at various times during a period of more than half a century; and these could not have been obtained, and read in a continued series, till long after the Gospel had been preached and the Church established in almost every part of the Roman empire. This is nothing more than plain historical fact, against which no opposing statement can have the least force. It is certain that neither S. Paul nor S. Peter *ever saw a New Testament*; and the same is true of the great multitude of those whom they converted to the Christian Faith.\*

\* "The Christian Church must have taught for at least sixteen years without any writings of the New Dispensation to appeal to. People often talk in a lax manner, which seems to imply forgetfulness of this important fact. One might imagine, from their language, that after S. Paul had been struck down on the road to Damascus, his primary duty on the recovery of his sight must have been the study of the holy Gospels. They forget that at that period not one of the four Gospels had been published, and that the Apostle's own Epistle to the Thessalonians is most probably prior in point

It was not, therefore, by the *written Gospel* that so many tens of thousands were converted, but by the *living voice of the Church* proclaiming the news of salvation by that Gospel. For, though the several portions of the New Testament, as they successively appeared, were to be read in all the local churches or congregations, yet it is evident from the books themselves that those churches were *already in existence*, already holding "the faith once delivered unto" them, and already endowed with the Ministry, the Sacraments, and all the elements of Christian worship and discipline. The Church, then, as a Divinely organized body or kingdom, was *older* than the writings forming the New Testament. But, in asserting this, we do not assert that it was older than the *Faith* recorded for safe-keeping in those writings. This Faith had from the beginning been preached, and everywhere made known by men who were commissioned to "go into all the world" and declare it. Hence the sacred writings, as they sprang up, were *a posterior*, and not an *anterior*, element in the development of the Church. They were the records or archives of the Church, written for the spiritual edification of the baptized; and the Epistles are addressed, not to the world at large, but

'of date to any one of them.' (*Christian Remembrancer*, vol. II., 1868, p. 275.)

"The Apostles preached before they wrote; and the primitive Bishops sat at their feet, antecedently to the reception of the Epistles, or even of the Gospels." (*Dean Hook.*)

to prominent local "churches" of the saints, or to persons already in "the household of faith." From all which it is clear that the Church was *not* founded on the Christian Scriptures, but that those Scriptures had their origin in the Church and were proofs of its *previous* existence.

In that primitive age, the constitution, ministry, and official powers of the Church, could not possibly be otherwise than accordant with the statements of them in the written word; and conversely, those statements, when brief or obscure, were illustrated and made clear by the merest glance at the great living Church, of which all Christians were members. For this reason, every modern theory of the Church which *differs* from the original Catholic model, must necessarily fail when tested by Scripture, even though it may be upheld by any amount of confident assertion and ingenious interpretation. Its claim to be "Scriptural" is invalidated by the simple fact that it is a *deviation* from the form once for all impressed upon the Church by Divine wisdom.

Turning now to the American (or "Protestant Episcopal") Church, it will be evident from even a brief study of her history, formularies, authoritative documents, and controversies, that her position is *not* that of a mere religious society, sect, or denomination; for, by no possibility can her principles and language be brought into harmony with the Church-theory of any Protestant sect, except by a violent wresting of them from their old and legitimate import.

The American Church, disowning all modern theories about "Church-government," claims to be, on her part, thoroughly *Scriptural*; because she is an integral part of that very Church which was organized under the Apostles,—that "kingdom of God" which was destined to be through all ages the witness and dispenser of life and light to the world. It is a matter of undoubted history that in, or very near, the Apostolic age, the missionaries of the cross planted the Church in the British isles. From that beginning, the Church—reinforced and consolidated by the mission of Augustine in the 6th century—has maintained a continuous existence in England to the present day; and through her, the American Church traces her descent from the primitive era. That the British Church in the early centuries differed not in nature and constitution from the Church now existing, is apparent from all history, and from the fact that British bishops were present in councils as early as the year 314. In those days there was no discrepancy between the *Church* and *Scripture* as to the nature, organic form, and government, of the kingdom of Christ. It was impossible in the nature of things, that there *could be* any disagreement between such an institution, and the records of those inspired writers who laid its foundations and reared its superstructure. And the idea of the "Church" as given in the New Testament, and visibly displayed by the Church itself in successive ages, is that which is everywhere

prominent in the formularies and use of the Anglo-Catholic Church, whether in England and her Colonies, or in the United States. To the Creed-name of the Church,—“one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic”—she affixes no new and popular sense, but adheres strictly to that which was universal in the days of the early Councils. This cannot be said of any of the non-episcopal sects. For, though in many of their Confessions of faith the *words* of the Catholic Creeds are retained, yet those words are invested with a new and *uncatholic* meaning.\* In the primitive age, and in the early Councils, such a meaning would have been promptly rejected as novel, and, at the root, unsound and repugnant to Scripture. But the Anglican Church has resolutely adhered,—even in times of Papal oppression, trial, and persecution,—to the original and invariable sense which those Councils attached to the words descriptive of the Church. In this sense only, and not with any modern or time-serving qualification or gloss, does the American Church interpret the ancient title of the Church, and assert her own right to it by inheritance.

\* It is freely granted that the more orthodox denominations repudiate the popular idea that the Church of Christ has no definite boundaries or form, but embraces in one huge conglomeration the voluntary societies of all who call themselves Christians. Their view, so far as it goes, is sound, Scriptural, and Catholic; but they fail to see that, if fully carried out, it would extinguish *all sectarian organizations*; because those organizations themselves are violations of that law of unity which is a fundamental principle of the Church of Christ.

## CHAPTER XII.

### AN AGED LAWYER'S INVESTIGATIONS.

IN days long gone by, when I resided in what is now the Diocese of Northern New Jersey, I had among my parishioners one who had passed his 70th year before he became aware of the difference between the Church of God, and a voluntary religious association or sect formed by the wisdom or unwisdom of man. He was a person of high distinction in the legal profession, and was remarkable for his acuteness and patience in unravelling any knotty questions that came in his way, or were submitted to him for investigation after his retirement from the bench. Few lawyers of his day stood higher than he in forensic or general learning, extensive influence, or social position ; and fewer still were his equals in old school refinement, and in a winning suavity of manner. He was also a man of strong religious convictions, adorned by the serenity of a holy life ; and, from early age to the "three-score years and ten," he had been a firm and faithful upholder of Presbyterian doctrine and institutions.

At that late period of his life, a book treating of what are commonly known as "Church principles,"

came into his hands ; and, on reading it, the effect—as he himself described it to me—was like the opening of a *new world of ideas*, which at once surprised and startled him. For the first time, a doubt regarding the certainty of his religious opinions sprang up in his mind, and it annoyed him exceedingly. It was as if he had discovered a flaw in the title-deeds of his estate; but he was sensible that it touched a point of far higher interest. The book before him was apparently truthful, calm in its tone, free from the acrimony of party-spirit, and brought before him an array of facts and important principles which, if well-grounded, would by necessity compel him to abandon his present sectarian position, and become thenceforth a faithful soldier in the army of Christ. It thus involved an issue which came upon the mind of this conscientious and able Presbyterian with all the force and suddenness of an event, never before contemplated, even as a possibility. But the more he read, and found in that reading an exact correspondence with holy Scripture, the more was his confidence undermined in the opinions which he had inherited from his sectarian ancestors ; and, in the event he resolved, in the fear of God, to subject the evidence in his hands to a rigorous investigation, or (as he expressed it) “to probe the whole matter to the bottom,” and that, too, without much delay.

To this “probing” he brought all the forces of his mind, allowing neither pride, long-standing sympathies, the ties of party, or the probable rupture of

old friendships, to bias him in an investigation which touched so closely the very springs of his religious life. It was a labor of time,—a labor growing more and more absorbing, as he traced from its beginning the wonderful history of the one only Church of God, and found it still existing and flourishing, even (as it were) at his own door, and still holding out to all human souls the same pure doctrine, the same holy Sacraments, the same Ministerial Order and pastoral authority, which it possessed in the Apostolic age. The conclusion was reached, not by any sudden impulse, but deliberately, and after a minute and rigid scrutiny of the evidence before him ; and that conclusion he announced to me, with characteristic emphasis, in these words :—“*Sir, I am perfectly satisfied.*” The nature of that satisfaction and its result, will readily be anticipated. At the first opportunity afterwards, this venerable and patient searcher for truth was confirmed by Bishop George W. Doane, and was soon numbered among the most influential and resolute defenders of the faith and Church of Christ.

Now what were the particular points or facts which our aged friend discovered in the course of his investigations ? This question I have not the means of answering in his own words ; but I am prepared to give, in substance, the conclusions at which he arrived. 1. He found that those familiar words in the Creed,—“one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church,” mean something quite different from

an *invisible* Church, or a collective body of sects, or anything that is merely ideal and unsubstantial. 2. That those words mean an organic body, visible, real, substantial ; and as capable of verification by all men, as the existence and attributes of any earthly kingdom, institution, or social body. 3. That this body or Church is historical, having originated with our Lord and His Apostles ; and that it is a permanent and self-perpetuating body, never to be destroyed, and never to lose its Divine authority and supernatural gifts. 4. That the true Church is, therefore, older than the Reformation, older than mediæval times, older than the age of Fathers and Councils, and older even than the books of the New Testament ; for those books not only speak of it as already in full exercise of its powers, but also bear record of its origin and of its constitution and Faith. 5. That this "Church" is "the kingdom of Christ ;" which kingdom is the one visible organism on earth through which the Holy Spirit conveys to mankind the benefits of Christ's Incarnation, His precious Death, and glorious Resurrection. And, 6, that the ecclesiastical body popularly known in the United States as the "Protestant Episcopal Church," is one of the several branches of this original Church or kingdom of Christ ; having inherited, through the Apostolical Church of England, the uncorrupted Faith and Order of the Gospel, and being in unity with the primitive age by an unbroken line of succession.

In the broad light of these facts, derived as they were from Scripture, and from a review of the early and later history of the Catholic Church of England, the transition above mentioned from a modern sect to unity with "the body of Christ" was, in the judgment of my venerable friend, a thing of immediate *necessity*. It was not even a matter of choice or preference, but a case of *obedience*—at any cost—to the plain demands of Scripture, conscience, and enlightened reason. It was the abandonment of an untenable position, and the resort to one that was impregnable. For a *schism* is a disturbance and infraction of the settled Order of God's Church, and can only be excused as a *temporary* revolt against the imposition of unlawful terms of communion. A schismatical body which has *not* this plea for its vindication, but assumes for itself an independent and permanent existence, as if it stood on an *equality* with a true branch of the Catholic Church, is thus, by its own act, in a position which the sacred writers denounce as carnal, sinful, and contrary to the mind of Christ. There is no ground either in Scripture or right reason for its existence, so long as the Church from which it stands separate is not chargeable with false doctrine, or the enforcement of unscriptural terms of communion.

The Protestant bodies that sprang up in England at and after the Reformation, planted themselves *ostensibly* on the ground of opposition to "Popery," and also to what their leaders judged to be Popish

elements still remaining in the doctrine, order, and worship of the Anglican or Anglo-Catholic Church. But the contest between that Church and the sects was, in reality, a contest of another and far more dangerous sort. It was a contest, on the one side, between the *ancient Christianity of the Church*, as it had been held by Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Fathers, and Councils; and, on the other side, certain *new forms and theories* of Christianity, which had arisen chiefly from the speculations of individual minds on the bare letter of Scripture.\* The result of these speculative theories may be seen in the sectarianism of the present day, with its endless divisions and subdivisions, and the fearful obstacles which it has thrown in the way of the advancement of the true kingdom of Christ. Unity is the first law of God's Church, as it is also the indispensable condition of perfect action in all organized bodies, moral systems, and even mechanical structures. The very terms and similitudes under which the Church is described, as, *i.e.*, a human body, an army, a kingdom, a city, a house or temple, an ark or ship,

\* "The real contest throughout Queen Elizabeth's reign, was, whether the Church of England should remain Catholic, with the abolition of certain errors introduced during the lapse of ages, or whether it should be converted, under the pretext of reform, to a mere *Protestant sect*, such as Calvin had established at Geneva, and his followers had propagated in different parts of the Continent." (*Lives of the Archbishops*, by *Dean Hook*. Vol. v. p. 65.)

a tree, a vine, a net, the family of God, and the bride of Christ, all imply *unity*, and all therefore exclude the idea of separation or dismemberment. Of all this the Anglo-Catholic Church is fully conscious ; and for that reason she disowns, repudiates, and constantly prays against all “false doctrine, heresy, and schism,” as both sinful, and in these times inexcusable. The very presence in this land, or in any other, of a branch of the Catholic Church, which, on Scriptural and primitive tests, cannot be charged with corruption either in doctrine, order, or worship, deprives every sectarian organization of its one only plea for a separate existence. *This must be felt and owned before any project for the healing of divisions can have promise of success.*

A Church is not, as many thousands of well-meaning people have been taught, a mere company of human beings professing a similarity of belief in the Gospel, and voluntarily associated for purposes of worship and religious intercourse. This popular error hardly needs refutation ; for neither Presbyterian, Lutheran, nor Baptist would, probably, admit the right of *every* such body to call itself a “Church.” And yet, from beginnings, not very ambitious, have grown up various “denominations” claiming and using that exalted title. In the Divine order of things, the Gospel is inseparable from “the kingdom” which that Gospel proclaims. They *co-exist* as parts of one great system, and each comes to disorder and ruin when separated from the other. For

the Church is an organization which has its source of life in the *Incarnation of the Son of God*. If Christ had not come in the flesh, there could not have been on the earth such an institution as the Christian Church. At the very root of that Church is this union of Divinity and humanity in one Person, never to be separated. And from this fact of the Incarnation grows the possibility of man becoming a "partaker of the Divine nature," by a new birth "of Water and of the Spirit," which constitutes him a member in "the body of Christ," to be hereafter nourished with His "most precious Body and Blood." The Church is thus united both to the humanity and the Divinity of the Redeemer; and this union can never be broken except by voluntary and unrepented sin after baptism.

The wide difference between the Christian Church and a mere company of men professing belief in the Bible, but still not in actual union with that Church, may be inferred from almost any page of the New Testament. "I am the vine," said our Lord, and "ye are the branches." Now, men are *not* such branches *by nature*. They have no living union with the vine. They cannot graft themselves into it. They can become such branches *only* by a supernatural process, *i.e.*, by sacramental union effected in baptism. Our Lord is also described as the "Head" of the Church, which is "His body." But, by nature, men are *not* members of that body. They have no part in it, nor can they come into union

with the Head by any act—mental, or otherwise—of their own. It is *Christ's* body; and no new member can be added to it, except (as before) by supernatural grace. Again, Christ is also represented as a “Rock;” and the Church as a vast and beautiful building erected on it. On this Rock stands the secondary foundation of Apostles and Prophets; and above this, the great edifice formed of innumerable “lively stones.” But no man originally belongs to, or forms a part of, this building. Nor by any power of his own, or by any acts of his own mind and will, can he insert himself into its walls, and thus come into union with the eternal Rock at its base. God only can do this, and His act is an exercise of *supernatural* power through the instrumentality of baptism. “As many of you as have been *baptized into Christ*, have put on Christ.” (*Gal. iii. 27.*) For this reason, the Apostles were sent both to preach the Gospel, and to carry “the laver of regeneration” into all the world. And thus it was that those warriors of the faith went into all nations, bearing the banner of “Christ crucified,” delivering men from “the power of darkness,” and translating them into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

These ideas of the Church, though very far from being popular, have nevertheless taken strong hold on thoughtful minds. They have already borne fruit not only in the voluntary return of great numbers to “the household of faith” which their forefathers

forsook, but also in a wide-spread conviction even among sectarians themselves, of the error and the disastrous consequences of disunion. It is a significant fact that the enormity of the evils growing out of the present divided state of Christendom is candidly admitted by thousands of enlightened minds in the older Protestant denominations. There are not to be found any more striking statements of those evils, than such as have been penned of late years by able and impartial writers, whose position in sectarian bodies qualifies them to depict with force and intelligence the fundamental defects of their own systems.\* Such men have grown weary

\* Testimonies on this point are abundant and well known. The following quotation from a work of Dr. J. W. Nevin (Mercersburg), on "The Spirit of Sect and Schism," exhibits the evils of disunion in stronger terms than those usually employed by Churchmen themselves:—

"It is a striking, though most sad, illustration of the inward falsehood of the Sect system, as now described, that in most cases the original grounds of separation, with the bodies thus divided, have lost, to a great extent, frequently indeed altogether, the interest which they had in the beginning; while notwithstanding the door remains just as much closed as ever, in each case, against reconciliation and union. Witness the fragments of the Scotch secession, mechanically transplanted to this side of the Atlantic. Witness the old antagonism of Lutheran and Reformed, as still kept up in the American German Church, while yet the Lutheran Confession, for the most part, has utterly surrendered its own original principle, and swung clear over the Calvinistic line itself on the opposite side. Is Methodism any longer faithful to its

and heart-sick in trying to reconcile Christian unity with partisan estrangements, and to cultivate brotherly concord in the midst of strife and division. The obstacles are more than they have power to re-

first idea and design? And then as regards the mass of our more upstart native Sects, how few of them, if they ever had any intelligible, distinctive theory to begin with, can be said to know or seriously care what it was, at the present time? It is the curse of sectarianism indeed that it cannot be truly historical; whilst, at the same time, history is the only enduring form of life; "das Fertige ist das Todte"—what is *done* is necessarily also dead. The Sect life, sundering itself from the general consciousness of the Church (uncatholic), may start with vast show of spiritual freshness and vigor—like a divergent stream from the Euphrates or Tigris—but only, if it continue in such separate course, to lose itself ultimately in the sand, or settle into some stagnant pool, from which it can never afterwards accomplish its escape. It will not do to say: See how these Sects love one another, in the face of all their rivalry and outward separation! The 'invisible' unity, we are told, is something deeper and stronger, than the denominational lines and landmarks that challenge the eye of sense. But if it be so, why should it not have force to make itself visible? Or is it only that which is comparatively weak and partial, in our interior life, that can be expected thus to clothe itself with corporeity and outward form? Alas, there is palpable contradiction, and gross hypocrisy, in the whole pretence. To make the One, Holy, Catholic Church, a sheer invisibility, is just to convert it into an idealistic, Gnostic abstraction. Why not remand the Sect consciousness itself, into the same shadowy realm? Why not give us an *invisible* Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, as well as an invisible Church Catholic?"

move; and God's help cannot consistently be asked in support of schism. And so, they are longing for certainty and repose; longing for the true "kingdom of God;" longing, in short, for the visible, tangible counterpart of that Church whose form is already pictured on their imaginations and lovingly enshrined in their hearts.

It is easy, then, to account for the constant stream of secession from the sects, which has been flowing on for years past, when it is considered that there stands before men, in this land, a branch of that very same visible Church which began at Jerusalem:—that it exists, grows, and flourishes as the Divinely appointed "Witness and Keeper" of the truth; and that its outward and merely secular designation of "Protestant Episcopal" does not affect its inherited right to place and title in the "*Holy Catholic Church*." And this very Church, which the old Puritans denounced as corrupt, Popish, and unchristian, is now the refuge in which their descendants are finding safety from heresy, spiritual tyranny, and the pseudo-Christianity of an irreverent and speculative age.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LINES OF TRANSMISSION.

“WE had an ordination last Sunday,” said one; “and the Bishop preached. But it is a pity that we can’t have an ordination sermon without that old story of Apostolic Succession being thrust upon us.” It was an “old story” indeed; and therein lay its value. A *new* story on that subject would be a fiction, a blunder, and an anachronism, or rather, an impossibility. For, neither the Christian Ministry nor the Christian religion can be reckoned among the products of the present age. We have received both the one and the other through numerous parallel lines of transmission from their original sources,—which sources lie far back in the ages. It is an old story, but a true one, that eighteen centuries ago, the Ever-blessed Son of God founded a *Church*, which was to live forever, and to be the centre of spiritual life and moral renovation to all the nations of the earth. Before He ascended to heaven, He committed to His Apostles the rule, the teaching, the care, and the perpetuation, of this Church, till He should appear again, coming on the clouds of heaven. But as these Apostles, like all

other men, were mortal, while the Church itself was immortal, it was provided that the ministerial authority lodged in the Apostles, should be capable of transference to other chosen men, who, in like manner, should transmit it to others, and thus secure to the Church in all future ages, the same rule, the same Faith, and the same Divine gifts which it possessed in the Apostolic age.\*

It needs, therefore, no argument to show that if the Apostles had *not* appointed and qualified certain men as their successors, no one in after ages would ever have heard any "old story" about such a succession; for the Church would have languished and died out very soon after S. John, the last of those Apostles, had rested from his labors. And further, if those successors whom the Apostles really *did* appoint, had not ordained others in the same manner, to perpetuate and extend the ministry, there would have been no Bishops in these days to preach about Apostolic Succession, or to convey to others the ministerial commission, by the Word

\* "As Christ was sent by the Father, so He sent the Apostles; as the Apostles were sent by Christ, so did they send the first race of bishops; as the first race of bishops was sent by the Apostles, so they sent the second race of bishops; the second, the third; and so down to our present bishops; who thus trace their spiritual descent from Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and prove their divine authority to govern the Churches over which they are canonically appointed to preside." (*Lives of the Archbishops*, by Dean Hook, vol. iv., p. 203.)

and the laying-on of hands. *That*, indeed, is the whole matter in a nutshell. But, simple as it seems, the public mind has not yet grasped it ; nor so far apprehended its importance as to check all disposition to speak lightly of it as a mere myth, an ecclesiastical figment, or an absurdity “ fast dying out.” For this reason, something more may here be said by way of elucidation.

It is now near upon 1800 years since the last of the Apostles died. While they were living there could be no dispute about the validity of their ordinations, or the ordinations of those to whom they committed the power to ordain. But we moderns cannot leap over that vast tract of time as with a single bound, and place ourselves in the position of the early believers, who were taught by men who had seen the Lord, and been commissioned by Him. We cannot take our Candidates for Orders to S. Peter and S. Paul, nor to S. John in the isle of Patmos or in the city of Ephesus. Those eighteen centuries separate us as effectually from the personal presence of the men who had their commission directly from the “ King of kings, and Lord of lords,” as the broad ocean separates us from the empires of Europe and Asia ; *unless*, indeed, the distance be traversed by some tangible and unbroken line, like an Atlantic cable, affording to us an easy and available communication. In the post-Apostolic age the line of succession was a very short one, having but a few links or sections. As time went on new links

were added, and the line of transmission became what it has been in centuries past, what it is now, and what it is destined to be in all future ages. Its *existence* is as certain as the existence of the Bible ; and its permanence is as sure as the permanence of the Christian Faith ; for both the Bible and the Faith have reached us through this same channel of communication. It is also to be noted, that in the *Catholic Church alone* we have such a line of transmission in its integrity ; and without that line there would be no visible Church ; because the life or death of that Church depends, for many of its essential elements, on this fact of succession from Christ, through the Apostles. In this mode, and no other, we have received the Bible, the Creeds, the Sacraments, and almost all we know about the Christian religion. From the very beginning there has been in the historic Church, a succession, without intermission, of doctrine, preaching, worship, baptisms, Eucharists, Lord's-days, festivals, fasts, and corporate life. And, co-existent with all these, there has been a *Ministry*, or *Priesthood*, which has invariably accounted for its existence and authority in no other way than by what we now call *Apostolic Succession*. Outside of this succession from Christ the great high-Priest, the Church never conceived it possible (except by miracle) for even the holiest of her sons to "take part in this Ministry," or to obtain valid credentials as an "ambassador of Christ." For, in Christ's kingdom, as in every other, the authority of an ambassador

comes by transmission from the *throne*; and not by popular nomination, choice, election, or acquiescence.\*

Now, it was the most natural thing in the world, that the Bishop, as aforesaid, should touch upon Apostolic Succession in his sermon, as we infer that he did. For, if Apostolic Succession were merely an “old story,” the ordination might as well have been done by the Rector, or by one of the church-war-dens, or the sexton, as by the Bishop. But there was a difference; and it was a difference not arising from superior education, rank, talents, and influence; for a man may have all these without being a

\* “If we stop short of Christ, the Supreme Head of His Church, we have no foundation on which to rest, nor any source from which to derive any spiritual power at all. Everything will be left vague and uncertain. If a man preach, who sent him? (*Rom. x. 15.*) If he administer the Sacraments, who commissioned him? If he take upon him the government of the Church, who authorized him? If you say, the people; Whence did the people get their power? If you say, from God; produce the commission. If you say, from nature; then plainly not from Christ. Are the doctrines we preach, the doctrines of *nature*? the Sacraments we administer, the Sacraments of *nature*? the Church we govern, the Church of *nature*? While the doctrines are Christ’s doctrines, the Sacraments Christ’s Sacraments, and the Church Christ’s Church, the ministers must be Christ’s ministers, and derive their authority from Him, or they have no right to preach His word, and administer His Sacraments, or govern His Church, be their pretensions to powers from nature, derived through the people, ever so great, or ever so strongly asserted.” (*Bishop Seabury’s Sermons, vol. i., p. 40.*)

Bishop ; or he may be a Bishop, though neither a scholar nor a man of refinement. And hence the Bishop did well in magnifying his office, as S. Paul had done long before him. How, indeed, did the Right Reverend preacher come to be a Bishop at all ? and how came he to have more spiritual authority than the vestry-man, the organist, the bell-ringer, or the wives and daughters of any of them, but through this same thing called "Apostolic Succession ?" It could come in no other way that we know of, except (as I have just said,) by a miraculous intervention. It surely could not come by a mere election ; for votes, in such a case, even if there were ten thousand of them, could convey no spiritual gifts or power, they would merely imply the consent or the approval of the voters. Authority to act "in Christ's stead," and the right to rule and govern in "the kingdom of God," are not derived from human votes, nor are they conferred by any other exercise of merely *human* power. The affirmative vote of a whole nation could not change a layman into even a *deacon* in the Church of God ; but such a deacon *can* be made by anyone Bishop, even against the force of a negative vote from the whole population of the globe. Such is the difference between a perpetuated Divine commission, and the expedients to which modern sectarianism resorts to supply the disastrous loss of that commission.

Still, there is nothing in Apostolic Succession so mysterious, perplexing, or fanciful, as to give any

colour of reason to the popular opposition to it. It is simply an application of the old and well-known principle of *continuity*, or the law of cause and effect, to the Christian Ministry. Such continuity we can trace in a thousand things with which all men are familiar. The idea of succession is involved in the present existence of anything which began existence in time past, whether near or remote; or in the present action of any force which received its first impulse ages ago. Every living body has its origin in a living body before it; and that, in like manner, in one anterior to it—thus forming a chain or line of living bodies, which runs on into the past, till we get back far enough in thought to reach the original act of creation. There is not a human being now living who is not thus connected, by an unbroken succession of preceding lives, with the first parents of our race. And thus every man may see in himself the result of a succession *much longer* than that of which we have been speaking; and, this succession may go on, through his children, and their posterity, for an indefinite time in the future. It is the same thing also among social or corporate bodies of all kinds; for they maintain their existence and peculiarities by a continuous succession of members, officers, privileges, etc., under an original constitution or charter; and the powers belonging to such bodies can only be verified and exercised by virtue of that succession.

The Church, therefore, in asserting what is implied in Apostolic Succession, merely asserts the

truth of her own claims to *be* the Church, and that she inherits by regular transmission the attributes and spiritual powers belonging to that Church. That her existence as an organized body dates from the Apostles' days, is a simple historical fact which has no necessary connection with High, Low, or Broad, Church opinions, or with Popery, Protestantism, Rationalism, or any sect or "ism" whatever. Like any other historical fact, it lies open to the judgment of *all* men, whether Christians, Jews, Mahometans, heretics, or infidels. But it is impossible to read Church-history without reading at the same time this "old story" of Apostolic Succession. Face to face it meets us everywhere—in all times and in all lands. It was a line, the numerous strands of which ran out over all the world long ago; and have, in these last days, reached every corner of the land in which we live. By one or other of those strands, every Bishop in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, holds a direct lineal relation to the Apostles, and becomes a sharer in their official powers.

There seems, in truth, to be no choice between a succession of some kind, and the reduction of ordination to the grade of a mere empty unmeaning ceremony. If the ordainer has not himself received the power of ordaining from others before him, his act must necessarily be null and void. A true ordination really *conveys* or *imparts spiritual authority*; and therefore, those who ordain must themselves possess the authority which they profess to convey to others.

But, if so, whence did these ordainers *obtain* that authority? Obviously it could only be from those by whom they themselves were ordained. And thus we come at once on a *line of succession*, which must either run back to the Apostles' days, or vanish into nothing at some point on the way. This issue did not escape the discernment of the founders of Presbyterianism, who were acute enough to see that a new Ministry taking its start 1500 years after our Lord's ascension, and never heard of before, must necessarily be illegitimate and without Divine warrant. To avoid this fatal charge, the novel theory was invented that there was originally only *one order of Ministers*, that Bishops and Presbyters were essentially *the same*; and that, by consequence, the power of ordination resided in Presbyters as well as in those who were called Bishops. This theory, which is refuted by every page of ecclesiastical history, is nevertheless remarkable, from the fact that it still embodies the *idea* or *principle* of Apostolic Succession. On this point the strict Presbyterian is in agreement with the equally strict Catholic Churchman. Their divergence is solely on the *practical issue* of the principle. The one holds a succession in the lines of *presbyteries*; the other to a succession in the lines of *Bishops*—both parties claiming an uninterrupted transmission of ministerial authority from the Apostolic age through their respective lines. Hence, the controversy with Presbyterians is not on “Apostolic Succession” it-

self, which both parties admit, but on the further question whether Bishops and Presbyters are of the same Order, and possess equally the power of ordination. The Churchman, however, has proved, over and over again, that in the whole period from the first century down to the middle of the sixteenth, the Ministry of the Church was universally Episcopal. In whatever part of the world Christianity was planted, there we are sure to find this Ministry; and of no other is a trace to be found in all the records of the Catholic Church till we reach the era of the Reformation; at which time, through an alleged *necessity*, the present non-episcopal ministries took their rise.

Though the term "Apostolic Succession" is commonly restricted to the derivation of the *Ministry*, yet, in the mind of a Churchman it has an aspect of still higher significance; because it relates also to the transmission of spiritual life, supernatural powers and gifts, and all the benefits flowing from the Incarnation, the sacrifice on the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit. As the Church is the body of Christ, it is a living and not a dead body; and this implies, not only the continued *existence* of the Church, but also the perpetuation of all those spiritual endowments which it possessed in the first age,—endowments which were to pass on, and to be exercised in every future age, for the reclaiming and renovating of all human souls. In this light, Apostolic Succession and the Christian Church have ever been, and ever will be, inseparable.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A MOTHER'S NOVEL IDEAS ABOUT BAPTISM.

IN parishes which have grown up by large accessions from exterior sources, the new-comers are apt to bring with them certain forms of speech which contrast very oddly with the current language of the Church. These forms cling to them like idioms of their mother-tongue; and to get rid of them, and become familiar with the Church's vocabulary, is not only a work of time, but too often an unattainable accomplishment. With them, the Rector is styled "our preacher;" and they go to church "to hear him." The surplice is a "white gown." Children are brought to the font to "give them a name." These people think that they "join the Church" when they become communicants; and are not "members" till then. The sponsors in baptism are people who "stand up" for the child. If a man is penitent, he is said to be "convicted," or "under conviction;" and he is not "born again" until he is "converted" or is "hopefully pious;" and when he dies, he goes, not to Paradise, but straight to heaven. There are other mistakes, not quite so common,

especially about baptism. These occur chiefly among people of low education, but still honest, sincere, and often willing to be instructed. The writer of this was once requested by a pious woman to baptize several of her children. She had recently come into the parish; and on calling at her house, I was surprised to find that the children were from eight to ten or twelve years old. On enquiry, I learned that the family had lived in Nova Scotia, and that all the children *had been baptized* by a Romish priest, whose church the woman had attended. On asking her why she had made to me so needless a request, she excused herself by saying:—"The Roman priest told me that *Protestant* baptisms *only lasted for seven years*; and I thought that maybe you believed the same about *Roman* baptisms."

But perhaps the best subject for comment in this chapter, will be a letter now before me from a lady, previous to a visitation of the Bishop. It ran thus:—

" March 20, 188—.

" REV. SIR :—

" I am much pleased to hear that the Bishop is to be here next month. I see by the papers that as many as 35 joined the church at Everton when they were confirmed, and that several others would become members at the next Communion. I also wish that my daughter Julia could be persuaded by you to join the Church. It would be a great comfort to me. But I am sorry to say that she is only *baptized*, and I think she ought not to become a *member* till she has been born

again, and made a child of God. Will you be good enough to call and have a talk with her? I will do all I can to prepare her for your visit; and I hope your kind advice will not be lost.

"Very sincerely

"Yours," etc.—

"Rev. ——"

This is one of those letters which very well represent the state of religious education in "this enlightened century." It might perhaps have been written two or three hundred years ago by some follower of Calvin or John Knox; but *before* that era, none but a professional wit could have crowded so many blunders into so few lines. Even in "the dark ages," neither man nor woman was accustomed to speak after so extraordinary a fashion. Benighted as some think the mediaeval folk were, still the very peasantry of those times had more light in their souls than to doubt whether a baptized child had been "born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost," and been made a "member" of the one only Church of God. It was not till a later period,—a period such as the present, in which all the foundations of the Christian Faith seem upturned,—that a baptized child or person could talk of "joining the Church" in the rite of *Confirmation*, or at the *Holy Communion*; or could suppose that the so-called "membership" of a parish comprised only the *communicants*. For, the true "membership" of a parish, *i.e.*, the number of Church-members, is simply the whole number of

*the baptized*,—men, women, and children, patriarchs and babes. Among these there may be saints and sinners of every spiritual grade, valiant soldiers and awkward recruits, gray-haired confessors and youthful worldlings ; but, as we are taught in the Bible, the visible Church comprehends them *all* ; and the sins of even the most recreant are the sins of one who is still “a child of God,” though not by any means what every such child ought to be.

As the case stands, then, we have only to say that the good woman who penned the letter before us, was not very well instructed in “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” She tells us that she has a daughter, for whose spiritual interests she has a loving regard ; and this daughter seems (by her account) to be in a very anomalous and puzzling position. The young lady has, at any rate, been *baptized*. Her mother admits this ; but is quite sure that she has not “joined the Church,” though, at the baptism, the Minister *received* her “into the Congregation of Christ’s flock,” and openly declared that she was, there and then, “grafted into the body of Christ’s Church.” It is further insinuated that the poor girl has not yet been “born again ;” nor is she a “child of God,” though the Minister and the congregation, at the baptism, gave “hearty thanks” to God, in these words :—“that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive her for thine own Child by adoption, and to incorporate her into thy holy Church.” It is, more-

over, to be presumed that the mother herself took part in *offering that very thanksgiving*. And we may also reasonably trust that, in after years, this same mother took the trouble to teach her child the Church Catechism, in which these words stand conspicuously at the very beginning:—“Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Now all this being so, it would seem that this kind mother had the singular faculty of hearing, reading, and repeating any number of words and phrases, with as little consciousness of their *meaning* as if they were the mere relics of a forgotten language. So far as appears, she must have brought her child to baptism, merely to give it a Christian name, or to comply with a common custom among Church-people. In her view, baptism was “an outward and visible sign” of something which might, (or might not,) happen by-and-bye; or a “sign” that the child was meant to be a “Protestant Episcopalian,” and might hereafter “meet with a change” by going to Sunday School.

It is strange enough that it never occurred to this lady that one of two things must be true, either (1st) that the baptism of her child was what it so clearly professed to be; or, (2d) that it was a profane and audacious trifling with holy things, an open mockery of God, and a deliberate fraud in the sight and hearing of any upright man. There is here no middle course consistent with common-sense, honesty, or

logic. The language of the Baptismal Office is so direct, outspoken, positive, and almost defiant in its energy, as to baffle all attempts at evasion, toning-down, or any other subterfuge of insincerity and unbelief. In the presence of all Christendom, and, if necessary, in the face of "a frowning world," the Church declares that every baptized infant *is* "born again," *is* "a child of God" and a "member" of Christ's "mystical body," which is His Church and kingdom.\* It is, then, simply a question of the truth or falsehood of the Baptismal form; and the Church vindicates that form by claiming for it, in substance, doctrine, and spiritual efficacy, the authority of holy Scripture, and the witness of all Christian antiquity.

Notwithstanding all this, the lady above spoken of thinks that her daughter, though baptized, has *not* been "born again," and is *not* yet "a child of God." Of course, then, the baptism was a failure,—a mere ceremonial act, having no spiritual value whatever, and no object other than the conferring of a name on the child. Now let us look a little further into this, and see to what an issue it will lead us. As a matter of reasonable conjecture we may suppose

\* "There is no other way of being *born again* made known to us, but what Christ has instituted,—*baptism with water and the Spirit*. 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except any one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'"*(Bishop Seabury's Sermons, vol i., p. III.)*

that the girl Julia was not quite as submissive, dutiful, and obedient as she might have been, either to God or to her loving parent. But if such failure of duty to her *heavenly Father* proves that she had never been "born again," then, by the same reasoning, the failure of duty to her *earthly mother* proves that she had *never been born at all*, and is not, therefore, the "child" of her *mother*, nor of anybody else. For, if undutifulness to *God* is, in itself evidence against *spiritual birth*, then undutifulness to a *mother* would seem to be equally good evidence against *natural birth*. And yet, while the lady refuses to call her undutiful daughter a "*child of God*," she still clings to that daughter as *her own child*, with all the force of a true mother's love. It seems never to have crossed her mind that, in so doing, she virtually claims to be *more tender, compassionate, and loving than God Himself*. *She* will never forsake her child, even though God should disown it; and therefore *her* love surpasses that of the All-merciful God, and the Ever-blessed Saviour!

Let this lady, and all others like her, bear in mind, that, as by natural birth *babes*, and not *full-grown men*, are brought into the world; so, by the new birth "of Water and of the Holy Ghost," *babes in Christ*, and not *full-grown Christians*, are brought into God's family and kingdom. In the one case, as the babes are the children of their parents; so, in the other, are they the adopted children of God; and, in both cases, the babes are to be nurtured and

fed "with food convenient for them," in hope that in due time they will arrive at the stature of perfect men. But, in the strange confusion of religious ideas now prevalent, this birth into God's family is supposed to be effected by a simple decision of the human will, under the alleged assistance of the Spirit of God; and that the product is not a *babe* at all, but a *man* in Christ Jesus, with all the powers belonging to adult age. Hence, on the popular system, a man convinced of his sinfulness, and in some general way confiding in Christ for salvation, is said to have become a "Christian," all at once, even though *unbaptized*, and as indifferent about either Church or Creed, as he is ignorant of both. It is safe to say that we read of no such "Christians" in the New Testament; and until the great Head of the Church sees fit to revoke His own appointments, Baptism must still remain the Sacrament of the New Birth, and the instrument by which we become "the children of God."

## CHAPTER XV.

“NOT DISCERNING THE LORD’S BODY.”

NOTWITHSTANDING the current teaching of the Church concerning the holy Eucharist, and the numberless treatises, sermons, essays, tracts, etc., which illustrate and confirm that teaching, we still find, lingering in many minds, a very erroneous conception of the nature of that holy Sacrament, and particularly of the heavenly gift imparted to every worthy receiver. It may be safely said that there are hundreds of communicants, even of long standing, who, if questioned, would express their minds in some such terms as these :—“I go to the Communion because I think it my *duty* to do so, in obedience to our Lord’s command. But, in my judgment, the bread and wine are to be regarded simply as signs or symbols, to keep us in remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Saviour. The design of the Sacrament is, as I suppose, to stimulate and strengthen our devotional feelings, and so to excite our faith that we may obtain whatever benefits are promised to us in the faithful reception of that Sacrament.”

It requires but little discernment to see that, if

this were the *sole purpose* of the holy Eucharist, that Sacrament would rank no higher than an external act or ceremony provided for the relief of a languid faith, the excitement of a sluggish imagination, and the periodical help of an infirm memory. This at least would be a natural inference ; for, if the sacramental elements are *only* figurative, or symbolical of something absent or historical, e.g., the sacrifice on the cross, it must be their office simply to stimulate thought and reflection about that thing which they represent. In that case, *memory* would become not an ordinary but a chief factor in the efficiency of the Sacrament. And though it is assumed, in the above saying, that the faith which that holy Sacrament stirs up in drowsy souls is rewarded with some special benefit or blessing, yet that benefit is supposed to be like any other operation of the Divine Spirit, and not *peculiar* to the Eucharist, and identified with it. On this Zuinglian theory, (for it is nothing less,) it would logically follow, that, to a person of vigorous faith, lively imagination, and unfaltering memory, the Eucharist would be almost a *superfluity* ; because he could realize most of its benefits at any time or place, *without* partaking of the Sacrament itself. And, on the other hand, it might reasonably be expected that the most earnest demands for *frequent celebrations* would come from those who were mournfully conscious of their *want* of such qualifications as a good memory, etc., and were urgent in seeking relief for

their spiritual infirmities by resort to the holy Communion. But, in ordinary experience, this does not prove true. We find that frequent Communions are *not* the fruits of an infirm faith, but of that which is intense and active; and, in neither case is the weakness or strength of the communicant's *memory* a matter of prime importance. We come then to this conclusion, viz., that the above saying is open to a good many objections, and cannot be accepted as a fair sample of Churchly thought.

No one, of course, can doubt that memory has its proper place in the holy Communion. The more vividly we can call to mind the bitter sufferings and precious death of the Redeemer, the better shall we be prepared for the Sacrament in which they are commemorated. On this point, there is nothing to censure in the opinion under notice. The error lies in so limiting the Communion to a mere "*remembrance*" of Christ's sufferings and death, as to exclude from view the most essential, vital, and mysterious traits of that holy Sacrament. It is on this error alone that I wish to make some further comments,—avoiding, as much as practicable, the discussion of several other and deeper questions relating to the Holy Eucharist.

That our Blessed Lord gave the command, "Do this in remembrance of me," and that the Holy Communion has thus a commemorative aspect, is universally understood and believed. It involves, of course, an act of memory, a calling to our vivid re-

embrance the sacrifice once offered on Calvary. But the Holy Eucharist is *much more* than this, and much more than anything implied in the Zuinglian hypothesis. The very words of Christ just cited, when rightly interpreted, speak of *a memorial offered before God*, as well as a *remembrance* on the part of *man*. And ever since the Apostles' days, the Church has viewed this venerable Sacrament as a "holy mystery," in which spiritual life and nourishment are conveyed to the souls of the faithful,—an idea far transcending the notion of the Communion being chiefly "*a religious ordinance*" in memory of the Redeemer's offering on the cross.

Besides, if "*remembrance*" were all, it is not irreverent to say that this Sacrament does not seem to possess any exclusive or peculiarly significant means of attaining that object. It may even be asserted that in the symbolic *acts* of the Eucharist (apart from the words,) there is nothing so pointed and definite as to raise up in a mind not previously instructed, any striking conception of their solemn meaning. In many other modes which are *not* sacramental, the very same course of thought might be excited in any reverent mind,—as, for instance, by reading the narrative of our Lord's passion and death, or by an appropriate sermon, by a cross or crucifix, an elaborate painting, a sculptured device, and numerous other agencies fitted to awaken strong reflection. This is a difficulty on the threshold, which may suggest to those who hold the opinion

above recited, that on *their* theory, this Holy Sacrament loses much of its importance, and can hardly be considered "necessary to salvation."

But this reduction of the Holy Communion chiefly to a ceremonial act in memory of Christ's sufferings and death, fares still worse when tested by sacred Scripture. We need look no further than to the remarkable solemnity, the awe and mystery, attending the original institution of the Eucharist, to see that the "eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood" had a far higher significance than a feast to be kept simply in *memory* of Him. We find no such overawing solemnity in the institution of *Baptism*, though that Sacrament would also naturally become a standing "remembrance" of Christ, in whose Name we are baptized. Why, then, should this difference exist between the two Sacraments, seeing that *both* bear witness to Him, whose "blood cleanseth from all sin"? Besides, it was not likely that the Apostles would be liable to *forget* their Lord, while they were every day preaching "Christ crucified." Nor would their converts readily lose all remembrance of Him in whose Name they had been baptized, and for whose sake thousands of them were ready to lay down their lives. Nor could the Church itself, founded by the Son of God, ever forget Him while that Church would necessarily bear daily witness to the Incarnation, sufferings, and resurrection of its great Head. Nothing, then, could be more improbable than that the Blessed Redeemer

should ever be *forgotten* in any time or place where His Gospel, His Church, His word, and His baptism, had found admittance and won defenders. But this being so, it is demonstrable that the Holy Eucharist must comprise much more than a mere “remembrance” of Christ, illustrated or enforced by certain ceremonial acts.

In the faulty saying now under review, it is said that the elements in the Holy Communion are signs or symbols *only*; and that the essentials of the Sacrament are the excitement of memory, and the strengthening of faith, etc. If so, we shall be at a loss to account for the extraordinary and amazingly strange language in which our Lord and the sacred writers speak of these same *elements*. The receptive act in the Eucharist is by them described as the *eating of the Body, and drinking of the Blood*, of Christ,—a mode of expression which, on the objector’s theory, is utterly incomprehensible, and in no way descriptive of the matter in hand. And yet, our own feelings, on reading such language, will but faintly represent to us the horror which would come upon the mind of a *Jewish* convert, at the mention of an ordinance admitting of such a definition. But, in spite of all that, our Lord in speaking by anticipation of this Sacrament, does not hesitate to use such startling words as these:—“ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. . . . .

For, my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (*S. John*, vi.) And we read that, in consequence of such words, many of our Lord's disciples forsook Him; though nothing could have been easier than the quieting of their scruples by simply telling them that this was only a highly *figurative* way of describing a feast hereafter to be instituted to exercise the faith and memory of Christian believers.

It appears also that, long after this, the Apostle Paul used the very same kind of language; and that a special revelation was made to him respecting the mysterious nature of the Holy Sacrament thus described. He says, for instance,—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (or communication,) of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” And he goes on to say,—“whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” In this, the unworthiness is not said to consist in a profanation of the *memory* of Christ’s sufferings and death, but of His very *Person*,—His “body and blood,”—inasmuch as they did not “discern,” the Lord’s body. And that offence was of such grave import that the Apostle warns the irreverent among the Corinthians that he who does not thus discern the Lord’s body “eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;” and then adds:—“for this cause many are weak and sickly among

you, and many sleep," i.e., bodily affliction and an untimely death had overtaken many, as a punishment for profaning "the body and blood of the Lord." It is manifest enough from all this, that in the Apostle's view, these people were guilty of a far worse spiritual crime than an act of *forgetfulness*. The essence of the crime lay in this, viz., that they did not distinguish, or recognize by faith, "the Lord's body" in the Sacrament, but ate and drank the elements as if they were mere symbols, unaffected by consecration.

Without going any further into the Scriptural argument, I only ask those who entertain the opinion under notice, to bring together all these singular traits of the Holy Communion, these unusual forms of expression, the air of awful mystery in which the rite is ever shrouded, the precise and serious directions as to its reception, the punishments which fell upon those who partook unworthily, the fact of its being made the subject of a special revelation to S. Paul, the agreement of the sacred writers with our Lord Himself in speaking of it in terms which have no parallel in any other Divine institution; and they will see that, over and above the act of *remembrance*, there is in this Sacrament a far loftier purpose, even the communication of Christ's Body and Blood to the faithful, and with this the pledge of eternal life.

But the error in question is not only unscriptural, but also entirely discordant with the tone and lan-

guage of the Prayer-book. What, for example, is the first thing that strikes one's mind in the Communion Service, but the air of solemn majesty, in which it towers above all other Offices of the Church,—creating at once the impression that here is enshrined an idea of overwhelming sublimity? We do not trace anything similar to this in the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer, nor in the Office for Baptism, though *they* also abound with remembrances or recognitions of our Lord's passion and death. In them we do not observe that spirit of unearthly devotion and exultation which bursts upon us on approaching the Communion Office. The difference is so marked that it forces itself upon the attention of even those who are unfamiliar with the formularies of the Church; and it seems quite unaccountable on the low and meagre view of the Eucharist as a mere symbolical act. And if we go more minutely into particulars, such questions as follow will naturally occur to any one looking into the Communion Office, viz., Why are the elements to be so reverently *consecrated*? Why is the Holy Spirit to be invoked upon them? Why is it that though *Deacons* may baptize, yet none but a *Bishop* or *Priest* can celebrate "these holy mysteries?" How is it that only the *baptized* are allowed to partake at the altar, though the *unbaptized* may call the Saviour to "remembrance" in any other way as freely as they please? Why is it that Ministers are to exhort their people "to the often receiving

of the Holy Communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, . . . that so doing, they may, in case of sudden visitation, have the less cause to be disquieted for lack of the same?" Why is it that the Church esteems this Sacrament so important for the sick, that she sends her Priests to administer it by the couch of suffering? Why is it that the elements left after public celebration shall not be treated as common bread and wine, but are to be reverently consumed by the "Minister and other communicants, immediately after the blessing?" Why is it that sacrificial ideas and language pervade the whole Office? that the table is called "holy," and even an "Altar?" that there is to be a *Priest*,—a *Priest standing*,—a *Priest clothed in appropriate vestments*,—making an "oblation" of the elements; and that he is to use such remarkable words as these:—"Our heavenly Father hath given His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, *not only* to die for us, but also *to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament*." "My duty is to exhort you to consider the dignity of that *holy mystery*, and the great *peril* of the unworthy receiving thereof." "Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, *so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood*, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood?" What shall we think of all this, and of the conclusion to which it points? It would almost seem as if the Liturgy itself had been copied

from the writings of S. Paul, or moulded on the expressed words of our Blessed Saviour.

I have not proposed (as already said,) in these mere outlines of thought, to go further than to show that the saying at the head of these remarks, is not in harmony either with Scripture or the teaching of the Church. It is not only incomplete and one-sided, but is defective in the worst sense, by ignoring, or effectually obscuring, all that is mysterious and supernatural in the Holy Eucharist, and by reducing that Sacrament to little more than an exercise of the memory and the imagination. The drift of such an error is to keep out of sight the Divine gift, and to fix all attention on a mere subjective operation of the human mind. In the one case, there is offered to us that, which, after consecration, is declared to be "the Body and Blood of Christ;" in the other and lower view, we have chiefly a "remembrance" of the Redeemer's sacrifice, with prayers for a Divine blessing.—That there is, and should be, such a remembrance, in the deepest spirit of contemplation, none will deny. But besides this, there is opened to us, on *God's* part, a fountain of blessings of a character too mysterious to be fully explained, but by which "we are made one with Christ, that He may dwell in us and we in Him." \*

\* The following striking words from an able non-episcopal writer, will show that the error under review is repudiated not only by the Church, but by learned and devout men

How all this may be, we know only in part. God has not condescended to inform us ; and controversy on this point often ends in irreverence and presumption. We are concerned only with the *fact* as recorded, and as taught in all ages throughout the Church of God. We may dispute, as many do, and fill the Church and the world with the noise of debate ; but all our theories, speculations, and opinions, will prove illusive as a dream, so long as we cannot remove the veil. We may bow down to "the spirit of the age," and rationalize all mystery away from both Eucharist and Gospel ; but we shall only starve our souls in so doing, and make

among the denominations. "In the institution of the latter, [the Holy Eucharist], the Saviour said, 'Take, eat, this is *my* body, which is broken for you.' 'This is *my* blood of the *New Testament*, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' If, indeed, in the face of these solemn divine words, Christians choose to rob this ordinance of its substantial reference to Christ, and make it a mere empty memorial of a sacrifice, the force of which to put away sin is not present, they are in danger of following in the track of their prototypes, the Jews, who robbed their ordinance of even its typical reference to Christ, and offered mere vain oblations ; and as they by this misuse were gradually drawn into such a state as not to be able to recognize and receive the Saviour at His first coming, so there may be danger of their anti-types, by a similar misuse, failing in the power of discerning and acknowledging the Saviour at His second coming. There may be Pharisees and Sadducees among Christians at that great day." (*Rev. W. S. Krebs, in Mercersburg Review, July, 1868, p. 473.*)

shipwreck of the little faith we have. Revelation bears its grand witness to the fact that this Holy Sacrament is far more than mistaken men or thoughtless Christians take it to be. The Church has borne her unfailing testimony to the same high truth. And this is all we need, except God's grace, to keep us aloof from all "curious and carnal questions," and make us "worthy partakers" at His holy table.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CHURCH'S NATIVE LANGUAGE.

THE Church Prayer-book has many friends even among those who do not accept it as their standard of doctrine and worship. As a reliable basis, on the whole, for Christian unity, it has obtained, among the more orthodox Protestant sects, far more consideration than any of their own Confessions. But the recognition of the Prayer-book as a model, with *all* that it expresses or implies, is not a probable event ; nor would it be desirable until the Church and the sects arrive at some uniformity of belief concerning the true meaning of numerous terms and phrases, which occur not only in the Prayer-book, but in the Bible also. These are everywhere felt, by Protestants, to be so many stumbling-blocks in the way to unity, and are likely to remain for some time in the field of disputation. It has therefore been thought by many eager but short-sighted advocates of unity, that the Church might easily bring such disputation to an end, by simply revising the Prayer-book in a broad and generous spirit of liberality, and thus bring it more nearly into accord with the religious sentiment of the day. In other

words, the question is often asked :—“Why should the Church be unwilling to remove from the Prayer-book all antiquated words and phrases, seeing that they are so often misunderstood, and might be so readily replaced by terms conforming to modern usage?” The answer to such a question will occur at once to the mind of any intelligent Churchman ; but, it may, nevertheless, be more clearly apprehended and illustrated by reference to a few leading facts.

When the originators of several of the English-speaking sects forsook the old Catholic Church of England, and created separate organizations, one of two things had to be done,—either to confess themselves schismatics, or to defend their position by such means as might be most available. This latter purpose was attempted, partly by inveighing against the Church, and repudiating her authority ; and partly by infusing into certain ecclesiastical and scriptural terms, a *new meaning*, favorable to their own opinions, but hitherto unknown to the Church. This proceeding was obviously a necessity. For, in the nature of things, it was not possible that the grand and forcible truths indicated by those terms could be held in alliance with the vague and unsubstantial notions about the Church which were very generally adopted by the sectarian bodies. It was clear enough that the old wine would very soon be the ruin of the new Puritan bottles ; and, to ensure the safety of the bottles, nothing could be

more expedient than the process of diluting the wine. This step, once taken, led to the denouncing of the Church's language as frequently the vehicle of corrupt, unscriptural, Popish, and superstitious ideas,—the inference being that it stood in need of such a purgation as the disaffected were anxious to give it. The issue really aimed at, was nothing less than an entire revolution of Churchly thought, by the introduction of *sectarian ideas under cover of the Catholic language of the Prayer-book*; which language itself, through Divine Providence, they were unable to change, or seriously modify. Instances of these alleged reforms, we have in the new meanings affixed by the separatists to the words, Church, Catholic, Bishop, Priest, Altar, Absolution, Regeneration, "child of God," "member of Christ," etc. And the root and reason of this debasement of the Church's language was, in short, that unconquerable antipathy which existed in the sectarian mind to those clear, compact, and sinewy forms of thought, which were always called up by the words and phrases of the old saints and martyrs, so frequently occurring in the various Offices of the Church.

In the present day we are reaping the fruits of that disturbance of old-settled relations between religious *terms* and *things*.\* We see, all around us,

\* "Is it not the instinct of all old and great institutions, to be wary of abolishing prescriptions, even if apparently obsolete in practice, if they are conservative of some tradi-

the decay of that traditional faith and reverence which overawed, in some sort, even the most wayward of our forefathers. The very idea of organic and living connection with the Christianity of past ages,—a Christianity vast in power, faith, and love, whose majestic spiritual works and material monuments reach back, along the line of centuries into the day when “the Word was made flesh,”—all this seems strange, incomprehensible, and uncongenial to the minds of thousands who, nevertheless, speak familiarly of “the *Church*,” claim its title and privileges, and connect themselves by some transcendental and imaginative bond of affinity with the company of the faithful in the Pentecostal era. But, far worse than the evils incident to “our unhappy divisions” is the outlook of that spirit of *indifference* which prevails so extensively. For we are threatened with a wide-spreading acquiescence in the conviction that a religion so *many-sided* as Christianity appears to be, a religion of so many contradictory aspects, and so many irreconcilable sects, so broad in its definitions of doctrine, so tolerant of what it calls heresy, and so capable of attenuation to the very borders of unbelief, must be a religion without any objective substratum of truth, without any authority over the

tion which it would be wrong to formally abandon, and explicitly condemn, or which at some other time may show itself suited for the occasion, and therefore spring again into wholesome life?” (*Christian Remembrancer*, 1867, vol. i., p. 257.)

conscience, or any claim on the cultivated intellect,—a mere outcome of emotion, a form of sentiment, in short, only a time-honored *myth*.

The answer to the above question is, then, simply this:—that the Church is set for the promulgation and defence of the *Truth as originally delivered to her keeping*. That Truth she has enshrined in words and forms of speech, which, for long ages, have retained within the Church their original, orthodox, and Scriptural *meaning*. But, in the present day, and in the present disordered state of religious opinion, the demand for the change of *words* cannot safely be heard; because it is, ordinarily, nothing less than a demand for a surrender of the *truths signified* by those words. This admits of easy proof; for, if any given word were exchanged by the Church for a more modern one that was *really equivalent* to it, the promoters of the change would feel that they had not gained the point at which they aimed. With few exceptions the change of Prayer-book words or phrases is urged with the *very intention*, (sometimes openly avowed,) of attacking *principles*, or at least, annulling the obligation to receive and teach them. And it is observable that the tendency of such changes is almost always *downward*, and indicative rather of an advance towards latitudinarianism than to Catholic truth. It may be granted that, in relation to matters of slight importance, a wrong name, or a wrong sense imposed on a name, may do no serious harm among thoughtful people. Names,

even misapplied ones, do not affect the *intrinsic nature* of things; but they often confuse, distort, and pervert the judgments of men in the mass, in determining what that nature *is*.\* This is especially so when we are dealing with the long-standing names of large organized bodies such as the Christian Church, or even of a grand time-honored building, whose appellation is woven into the texture of a long and glorious history. In such cases, a wrong name, (as when the Church is called a "denomination,") or a wrong sense given to an old name, (as when "Catholic" is used for broad, liberal, comprehensive, etc.) though not affecting at all the *essential nature* of the thing spoken of, may, in the event, conjure up in men's minds an utterly false conception of the object, and work most injuriously in debasing their opinions concerning it.† It is

\* " You may, and often do, degrade a thing by misnaming it, as you elevate it by naming it right. Indeed, for one case in which actions change gradually the meaning of names, there are probably dozens of cases in every nation's history, in which names alter more rapidly the drift and tendency of actions, or else so much misconstrue them to the imagination, that men do not know them for what they really are."—(*London Spectator*.)

† Suppose, for example, that a few radical English Churchmen, in some time of religious turbulence, should place, in bold letters, over the entrance to Westminster Abbey, the words :—" *Protestant Meeting-house.*" Of course, no sensible person would believe that the venerable pile would thereby suffer any change or diminution of its glory. Yet, that very inscription would, in the course of time, give a mischievous

therefore no light thing to miscall or misunderstand an object, whose real qualities and historical value cannot be appreciated at a glance by the mass of men, but must be received on testimony and well-authenticated tradition.

On these grounds, the Church—like any other corporate body—is justified in guarding her words with some degree of jealousy and a prudent foresight of danger. A few years only have passed since the levelling spirit of the times grew rampant even within the Church itself. It was well known by the advocates of Prayer-book revision at that time, that the Church attached a strong and very determinate meaning to certain prominent terms,—a meaning which was obstructive to a freer intercourse with the “denominations” around. The whole drift of the proposed revision was to invest these terms with another and less positive meaning, or, at least, to make their use discretionary, or to supply them with alternate and always *feeble* readings. Every one knew that the Church spoke clearly and decisively on those points ; and her speech was the very object of resistance. Those points, moreover,

bias to the minds of ordinary passers by, and even of many a simple-hearted worshipper. In a generation or two, the glaring impertinence of the words would cease to be felt ; reverence for the old Minster would gradually die out ; and projects might perhaps spring up for the remodelling of the ritual, and its reduction to the standard of mere “meeting-house” devotion.

were not few in number. Nor were they mere blemishes which had accidentally come into the Prayer-book, but were in unison with its whole spirit and tone. Hence the bold assertion that the *Prayer-book itself* was faulty; that it demanded alteration even in *doctrine*; and that it abounded with “germs of Romanism;” though this charge was equivalent to an assertion, that both the Anglican compilers, and the American revisers in 1789, were ignorant of the difference between Romanism and Catholicity. It is almost needless to say that the Church in America, (as well as the Church of England,) has steadily resisted this incoming of a spirit which would soon destroy all the safeguards of Divine truth.

Next to holy Scripture, the Prayer-book is the Churchman’s vocabulary, and also his book of definitions. It has a name for everything in its range, and a thing for every such name. To confuse these, is to confuse and weary every religious mind. If the Church, for instance, uses the term “Catholic” only in its true and ancient sense, she thereby protests against its special application to the Church of Rome, and also against its popular abuse as a synonym for a general medley of Creeds and parties. A name which is already appropriated, stamped with the authority of long usage, and recognized by all Christendom as meaning *one certain thing*, cannot be claimed and given to some *other thing*, or impressed with a new sense, by the mere voluntary

act of any casual body of men, except at the risk of mischief to the purity of language and of religion also.

The Church speaks a language of her own, and sanctions no perversions of its old import. It is an ancient language, idiomatic, terse, compact and energetic, abounding with types of thought nowhere else conceivable, except in Scripture ; and so guarded by Divine Providence as to retain its form and purity amid all the mutations of human opinion. It is also an universal language, co-extensive with the broad range of the kingdom of God. Its sound has “gone out into all lands, and its words into the ends of the world.” The Church is the sole proprietor and interpreter of her own speech, as she is also the sole trustee of her own right and title. But all this is the reverse of the popular theory regarding religious names and things ; because that theory is not the *Church* theory, nor a theory that can co-exist with oneness of faith, or unity of heart and soul in the bond of one great Divine and well-ordered fraternity. When, as we have already seen, the very primal and fundamental idea of the Christian Church as “the kingdom of God,” visible on earth, and invisible in Paradise, yet still one “kingdom” with clear and well-marked boundary lines, has become so foreign to the public mind as to be reckoned among the extreme opinions of “High Churchmen,” we cannot wonder that the Church’s modes of speech also should seem obscure and some-

times strange to those who are unfamiliar with her teaching.

In regard to a few words in the Prayer-book which have "crept in unawares" and are—philologically considered—capable of various constructions, it does not follow that *any* one of those constructions may be chosen at will, without reference to its congruity or incongruity with the system to which it belongs. The *principles* of any system govern all obscurities of language in its documents. If, for instance, there were in the Constitution of the United States, or in any public document, a word capable of a monarchical as well as a republican signification, the latter would naturally and justly be accepted as giving the true sense of the writers. But, on precisely the same principles, a directly contrary judgment would follow, if a like dispute should occur in England, Germany, Italy, or any other country having a *monarchical* government. And thus, all obscure or equivocal words occurring in the Prayer-book, or in any Church document, are to be interpreted in a *Catholic* and not an *uncatholic* sense; because the English reformers, (whatever may have been their private opinions on certain points,) pledged themselves, over and over again, to do their work in strict consistency with the doctrine, polity, and usages of the *primitive Catholic Church*. Admitting, then, the existence of equivocal terms and phrases to any extent, yet it is certain that the Church has but one voice, when

her judgment is invoked on questions touching her Entity, Faith, Order, Sacraments, and Ethics.

It has been often said that the authorized version of the *Bible* has done more than any other book to give stability to the English language, and to preserve its purity. But it is not as generally understood as it might be, that the influence of the *Prayer-book* in this direction, has been scarcely less than that of the *Bible*. Wherever the *Prayer-book* is known it has exercised an incalculable power in preserving the *right meaning of religious terms*, and in restraining whatever tended to the debasing of sacred truth, or the confusing of religious thought. The great influence of a book circulated by millions, and proclaiming everywhere “the Gospel of the kingdom” in its simple native form, the authorized Creeds of Christendom, the primitive type and portrait of the Church of God, the supernatural efficacy of the Sacraments, and the highest and purest model of saintly life, can be but partially estimated, even when we number the thousands now in the Church, who, by this very beacon-light shining on their darkness, have been saved from a shipwreck of their faith. These hints may possibly do good service, should they meet the eye of “some poor wand’ring child” of distrust, and help him in his search for that kingdom, in whose shelter he will find rest and peace.

## CHAPTER XVII.

A "PROFESSOR OF RELIGION."

SEVERAL months had passed since I parted with an old and rather gay friend of mine, Frank Everton, who had gone on an excursion into the far West. Occasionally, a newspaper or a Postal card came to assure me that I was still had in remembrance ; and, at last, a letter arrived, in which he mentioned, among other things, and with all the brevity of a postscript, that he had become "*a professor of religion.*" This was *all* that he wrote on a matter which, at first sight, might seem important enough to deserve, at least, a line or two of details. I read the words several times, in order, if possible, to extract from them the intelligence which Frank doubtless meant them to convey. It was very unlikely that a man so well-bred would allow his pen to jot down such words in sport, or without some corresponding and recent fact to justify them. And so, under these impressions, and with a good deal of curiosity, interest, and bewilderment, I naturally drifted into a line of speculation as to the grounds on which my lively old friend had been led to call himself "*a professor of religion.*"

The obscurity of his statement lay altogether in these two things: 1st, that he omitted to tell me *what sort* of a “professor” he had become; and 2d, *what sort* of a “religion” he had undertaken to profess. This oversight on his part threw me upon a wide field of guess-work, with every chance of stumbling on some wrong conclusion. If the reader of this will allow himself to think of the case, just as it stands, his confusion will probably be not less than my own. We may imagine, for instance, that Frank has been promoted to a place of dignity in some University or Institution of learning; and that, through modesty or inadvertence, he neglected to write “professor” with a large capital “P.” And just here it occurs to me, that as Frank has travelled extensively in Europe, and spent some months in India and China, and prides himself very much on his large and liberal views about sacred things, he may possibly have received an appointment as “Professor” of some “religion” other than Christian,—a Professor (it may be,) in some Turkish, Chinese, or Hindoo literary Institution, where the prevailing religion stands prominent in the course of instruction. Or, again, if we take for granted that the *Christian* “religion” is meant, (which, on the whole, seems more likely,) then it may be possible that Frank has become a “Professor” in some religious department of a Seminary, or College, or Theological School at home. He may have been elected and installed as Professor of the Evidences, or of Church

Polity and History, Dogmatic Theology, Homiletics, or of the department of Ritual, Plain Song, and Cantus Figuratus. In that case, courtesy will require us to adorn his name hereafter with S. T. P., or some other significant letters.

But, even if we take the word "professor" with a little "p," and assume that the "religion" in question is what is commonly called "Christianity," we are still at a loss to know what are the real Articles of this gentleman's belief,—whether he professes the venerable Creed of his forefathers, or the Creed elongated by Rome, or the Creed expurgated by the sects, or the Creed vaporized by the Transcendentalists, or whether his religion may not be too ethereal and mystical to be embodied in any Creed at all. We are told, it is true, that he professes "*religion*," which is, above all others, the most vague and tantalizing way of stating the thing, because it affords us no clew whatever by which we can find out the *species* or *variety* of the religion he professes. In this enterprising land we have not only "the holy Catholic Church," but also a hundred or more "Churches" of modern contrivance, with "all the latest improvements;" and also a vast assortment of Gospels,—the old Gospel for the Catholic Church, the modernized Gospel for the "denominations," the diluted Gospel for the Christians at large, the hybrid Gospel for the speculative, the emasculated Gospel for the lovers of this world, and the colorless Gospel for those who love only that which "is

right in their own eyes." And besides all this, men, both wise and ignorant, find recreation every day in dissecting the Bible, rending asunder its bone and sinew, and forming out of them new organizations —many of them veritable religious skeletons unblest by the quickening breath of life.

In this confusion of all religious thought and energy, where are we to look for the man who with wonderful simplicity and assurance tells us that he has "become a *professor of religion?*" In older times, when the Prayer-book was set forth, and for long ages before, it was an easy thing to know what was the "religion" of every one who called himself a *Christian*. There was no guess-work about it, no need of enquiry as to a man's Creed or his "views," and nothing whatever to confuse even a child of ten years' old, or the most rustic of wayfaring men. No one ever asked, "What denomination do you belong to?" or "Whose church do you attend?" or, "Where do you go to meeting?" or, "How many persuasions are there in your town?" For, at that time, there was not to be found in the land of our Mother Church, *any one* of those organized sects, denominations, or persuasions, which now trouble the household of faith, deluge all Europe with heresies, and distract all religious thought in the United States. Every Christian man, woman, and child, had been baptized in the one venerable Church of his or her forefathers; and even the refractory Puritans, before their defection, had confessed "the faith

of Christ crucified," and been "signed with the sign of the cross," in that same old Church, against which they finally rebelled, and set up a new religion of their own devising.

It comes, then, to this, that we are as yet entirely in the dark about the spiritual *status* of this friend of mine, who claims to be "a professor of religion." Until further light reaches us, it would be unsafe even to write him a letter of congratulation. For, who can tell whether, at this very moment, Frank may not be professing something which will be a grief to me to learn, and a life-long worry and torment to himself also? It is true, there is an equal chance for the contrary; and it would be rash to predict the issue of the game. In short, Frank has led us into a morass of conjectures and possibilities, in our efforts to describe and classify that many-sided thing, "a professor of religion." He may have become a Jew, a Romanist, an Anglo-Catholic, a Presbyterian, a Quaker, a Come-outer, a Hard-Shell, a Tunker, or a Muggletonian, for anything we know to the contrary. Or, taking into view Frank's antecedents, he may possibly have "got" religion (as people say), under the stress and fascination of some popular revival,—"got" it, or caught it, as it were, by accident, without knowing exactly how the thing was done, or what he is to do with himself after this sudden promotion to the rank of a "professor." At any rate, we may admit that Frank has "met with a change" of *some* kind, and "religion" has been an

element in that change. The only point of embarrassment is the nature and quality of that religion.

It is admitted on all sides that "religion" does really mean something which has a salutary, purifying and elevating influence on the human soul ; although Charles Kingsley avers, in one of his sermons, that we read very little about "religion" in the *Bible*, (where we should expect much,) while there is in that holy Book a great deal concerning another thing called "godliness." And this remark, by the way, opens a new line of thought, and raises a further question, viz., whether our professor of *religion* is also a professor of *godliness* ; or, in other words, whether his religion may not be that of the melodramatic or sensational sort,—a religion which stirs and dominates not the *hearts* of its converts, but only their susceptible *nerves*, and their excitable fancies ; a religion which ignores all the toils, conflicts, disasters, and hair-breadth escapes which John Bunyan depicts in the story of his Pilgrim ; a religion (so called) which opens a new line of travel to the Celestial City, with easy transit over life's rough places, with no burden to carry, no Apollyon to fight, no scorching of feet in the fiery vale of trial ; but bright fields, flowers, and sunshine on every side, and, at the end, a convenient bridge over the rush and peril of Jordan's flood.\*

\* "A religion which is purely speculative is no religion at all ; it is a philosophy. A religion which consists of emotion only is nothing but sentimentalism, and is often gross super-

To a large class of men in this age, such a religion recommends itself by its great facility, its unobtrusiveness, and many other points of attraction. It dispenses altogether with the grave and stern self-discipline of the old-fashioned Gospel ; brings the world into close and amicable relations with the Church ; offers forgiveness of sins without absolution, regeneration without baptism, the Body and Blood of Christ without the Sacrament, and unity in "the Church of the first-born" by a mere spasm of faith or emotion ; it tempers or abolishes self-denial, bears its cross on cushioned shoulders, works out its salvation without fear and trembling, and trusts that a title to the glorious mansions of heaven may be acquired on far easier terms than were exacted, in Tetzel's times, for a twelve-month's relief from purgatorial pains.

In the old and faithful Catholic Church, to which the writer of these lines belongs, we have a habit, for which the reader will hardly blame us, of distrusting (more or less,) those who complacently style themselves "professors of religion." For, we know not whether they have ever been "grafted

stitution. Religious sentiment is sometimes extravagant mysticism, or abject terrorism. Either form is injurious, as it is an exaggeration of one side of religion, at the expense of the other. The aspirations of the heart must be controlled by the reason, and the intelligence must be humanized by the affections." (*The Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, By S. Baring-Gould, M.A. Vol. I., part I., p. 76.)

into the body of Christ's Church." We know not whether their religion is reared on "the faith once delivered to the saints," or, on the sandy basis of opinion and "human divinity." It is all in the region of conjecture, and we wonder at its indefiniteness. But men *will* have a religion, even if they must invent it; and they *will* have a God, even though it be a wooden one. For some reason which the evolutionists have not yet fathomed, there has always been found in the human constitution a curious bias in favor of some sort of a religion. This is not a peculiarity of the heathen mind alone; for it pervades all civilized life also. Even the ultra-scientists, who are by no means sure that they have immortal souls, solace themselves with visions of a "religion of Humanity," and a "religion of the Future," with the Unknowable for a Deity, and the Unthinkable for a Creed. They have not yet, however, conferred on their disciples the title of "professor." This folly, unknown to the heathen and the philosophers, finds place chiefly among those whose Bible teaches them not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think.

It is time surely that so unmeaning a phrase were cast out of the Christian vocabulary. In the Church of God we prefer that a man's distinction should be that of "a godly, righteous, and sober life;" which life he may lead without styling himself a "professor" of godliness, righteousness, or sobriety. As well might a private soldier be called a "professor

of military tactics," or a farmer, a "professor of agriculture," or a printer, a "professor of typography." For, all men profess many things of which it would be mere silliness to call themselves "professors;" and one who is a follower of Christ in heart, soul, and body, will be "known and read of all men" by the godliness of his life, without proclaiming himself, in the cant and empty language of the day, "a professor of religion."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“ REQUIESCAT IN PACE.”

IN the early part of the present century, there seems to have been very little activity of thought, or depth of interest, concerning the relations existing between the militant Church and the spirits of those who have “departed hence in the Lord.” The Intermediate State, though recognized in theory or verbal statement, was restrained in its practical issues by a lingering feeling of distrust, and a vague impression of its near affinity to the Romish doctrine of purgatory.\* The immortality of the soul became thus, in one very important respect, an unfruitful tenet; because death was supposed to terminate all communion, or exchange of sympathy and affection, between the living and the dead. Under this very general “eclipse of faith” in regard to the unseen world, the death of even the most saintly friend or relative was practi-

\* “ In the present day, anxiety to avoid the very blamable extravagances of the Church of Rome, frequently leads persons unwittingly to narrow the proper sphere of our religious affections, and to snap asunder many links between us and the invisible world.” (*Christian Observer*, 1816, p. 556.)

cally felt to be a total separation, and to involve an oblivion of all further connection and available interest with the departed, or of the departed with those still living on earth. This narrowing of Churchly thought to the limit of the present life, had, of course, some very natural results. It changed very seriously the bright tone and coloring of the religious life. The saints of old, and all the faithful, whether of high or low degree, had found in the contemplation of Paradise and the joys of its emancipated spirits, a never-failing source of consolation amid all the trials, and worrying spiritual annoyances, which the world could invent, or the flesh provoke, or the devil instigate. The loss, or even partial loss, of this habitual belief in the *continuity* existing between the Church on earth, and the Church in Paradise, threw a chilling air of solitariness on the religious life, wilting all the "joy of believing," and dooming many earnest and really conscientious people to cry,

" Our souls, how heavily they go,  
To seek immortal joys ! "

It was not without reason, then, that (under a similar state of things in the English Church), such men as Archbishop Magee, and Bishops Horsley and Tomline, like their predecessors, Taylor, Bull, Burnet, and Secker; and subsequently, Bishops Seabury, White and Hobart, of the American Church, were led to set forth, from pulpit and press, the true doc-

trine of the Intermediate State, for the instruction of thousands who needed to be reminded that “living saints and dead, but one Communion make.” That doctrine, so dimly apprehended, and often so far misconceived as to be ranked among the extreme and recondite teachings of a class of advanced High Churchmen, was thus, in a measure, restored to its true place as a legitimate deduction from Holy Scripture; and was further confirmed by the fact, that it had been distinctly set forth and defended by many learned and candid sectarian divines, among whom were Dr. Campbell, Scotch Presbyterian; Dr. Macknight, the Presbyterian Commentator; Dr. Doddridge, also Presbyterian; Dr. Wilson, American Presbyterian; and Dr. Adam Clarke, the Methodist Commentator, who thus followed the teaching of the Rev. John Wesley.

These all held and taught that there is a certain State, Place, or Condition, in which departed souls are detained until they rejoin their bodies at the general resurrection. And it is to the exclusion of this Scriptural doctrine or fact from much of the religious literature of past years, and the slight prominence given to it in the current teaching from the pulpit, that we must attribute the prevalent *unscriptural* notion that the human soul, on departing from the body, goes directly either to the place of eternal joy, or of eternal torment. This popular error is, of course, entirely inconsistent with the clearly revealed truth, that, at the last day, we shall

all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive our reward or condemnation. For, if men are sent to their reward or punishment *immediately after death*, what can be the object of a general judgment at the end of the world? If the decision has been made long *before* that event, the verdict rendered, and its execution carried into effect, why should the soul, after perhaps thousands of years of bliss or misery, be summoned again to God's bar, to give account for the deeds done in the body? The fact of the general judgment is, therefore, enough in itself to prove, that *till then*, the souls of the departed are detained in some place—neither heaven nor hell, but—a state in which the happiness or woe of each soul will result from its foresight or anticipation of the final decision at the last day.

Of this Intermediate State, the story of the rich man and Lazarus makes it apparent that the souls of the righteous and of the unrighteous are not mingled together, but separated by "a great gulf." We also learn from the narrative of the thief on the cross, that, in that state, the souls of the righteous dwell in what is called "Paradise." "This day," said our Lord, "shalt thou be with me in Paradise." That place could not be *heaven*, for the human soul of our Lord went not to heaven until His Ascension. Paradise, therefore, is a part or portion of *Hades*, the Intermediate State, "the place of departed spirits." \*

\* "Paradise is distinguished from the heaven of the blessed, being itself a receptacle of holy souls, made illustrious with

We recur now to the point already given out as the main topic of this chapter, viz., the close relation existing between the souls of the faithful departed,

visitation of angels, and happy by being a repository for such spirits who at the day of judgment shall go forth into eternal glory. In the interim Christ had trod all the paths before us, and this also we must pass through to arrive at the courts of heaven. Justin Martyr said it was the doctrine of heretical persons to say that the souls of the blessed instantly upon the separation from their bodies enter into the highest heaven. And Irenæus makes heaven, and the intermediate receptacle of souls, to be distant places—both blessed, both largely different in degrees." (*Bishop Jeremy Taylor's Life of Christ*, p. 700.)

"It was the belief of the primitive Christians, as well as of the old Jews, that at the departure of the soul from the body, it went to a secret, invisible place provided by God for its residence, there to remain till the general judgment; the wicked in uneasiness, remorse, and despair; the good in peace and refreshment, with an assured hope of God's favour, and a full acquittal at the final retribution. . . . On this ground stood the commemoration of the martyrs, and prayers for the faithful departed out of this life, that God would grant them rest and peace in Christ, and free acquittal in the day of judgment; and to give us grace to follow the example of their faith and patience, that with them we might be made partakers of His heavenly Kingdom, through the merit of Jesus the Saviour. . . . Every one who will consider the subject without prejudice . . . will lament that the Church of Rome by grafting the absurd errors of purgatory, and prayers to departed saints, instead of for them, on this old, and pious, and Catholic, Christian doctrine, hath almost banished it out of the minds of Protestant Christians." (*Bishop Seabury's Sermons*, vol. i., p. 197.)

and the souls of their brethren yet in the flesh. This relation suggests the two questions, 1st, Whether any influence can flow *from them to us*? and 2d, Whether any influence can flow *from us to them*? As to the first, we may safely infer, both from Scripture, and the nature of things, that a soul in Paradise, delivered from all further contact with sin and temptation, from all fluctuations of faith, uprisings of rebellious instincts and long-dormant lusts, would find every virtue exalted, every spiritual power set free and intensified, and all its capabilities of affection flowing out in streams of endearing sympathy and love to those who were still struggling in a world of trial and sorrow. Who then can doubt that every such soul in Paradise prays for its loved ones on earth far more earnestly and effectually than it ever prayed before its deliverance "from the burden of the flesh"? Can we believe that the charity of a ransomed soul in the Paradise of the blessed, is *less* fervent than that of the rich man in torment, who so passionately pleaded with Abraham for his five brethren on earth?

But 2d, admitting that the faithful departed pray *for us*, is it right and congruous with Christian principles that *we* should pray *for them*? This question is often answered in a summary way, by appealing to the universal practice of the Christian Church from a very early age, and the customary offering of similar prayers in the Jewish synagogues. The evidence is decisive, as the reader will find by consult-

ing the ancient liturgies, the writings of the Christian fathers, and the history of the early Church. Instead, however, of reproducing more or less of these testimonies, I prefer to guide the reader along another line of thought, which will show one or two of the *reasons why* prayers for the dead (as distinguished from the Romish purgatory,) have prevailed so extensively in the Church.

Prayer, in itself, is not a distinctively or exclusively Christian practice, nor a peculiarity of any religious system. In its simplest form as an appeal from the creature to the Creator, it seems to be so spontaneous and universal, that it may safely be regarded as an instinct of our nature,—an irresistible inclination to seek protection and blessing from a superior Power. In every age, in every land, and in every condition of humanity, from the mouth of savage and sage, from the lips of the rude and the refined, the voice of prayer in some form has been heard. The impulse in the direction of prayer survives even in the desolate spirit of Atheism itself; for, in moments of extreme peril, the unbeliever involuntarily cries out in his terror;—“If there *is* a God, let Him draw near, and help me!” Men *will* pray, though it be to the sun, moon, or stars, to a statue of marble or gold, to an ideal divinity, or even to a wooden god, made, as they know, by their own hands.

The prayer of a *Christian*, however, is not only an instinct, but a privilege, a duty, and a necessity, at

all times. Within the Church, men stand in a very near relation to God, and their prayers ascend to the mercy-seat in union with the intercession of that Holy One, who, after He "had overcome the sharpness of death," set open "the kingdom of heaven to all believers."\* This, then, brings up the question, "What is the *scope* of prayer; and is it subject to limitations, conditions, or qualifications?" The answer, derived from Scripture, is this; 1st, We have no right to ask for things which are contrary to God's law, or inimical to the principles of justice and righteousness, or perilous to the interests of men's souls or bodies; 2d, We must ask "*in faith, nothing wavering*"; and 3rd, Prayer must be offered in the Name, and through the merits, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What then, under these conditions, is the real scope, range, or province of prayer? Does it extend only to the various spiritual and temporal exigencies of our *present* life? or, Does it reach onward to those things which affect our condition in the *fardistant future*,—things relating to the world to come, to a life beyond the grave? (Let the reader

\* "Although in man's natural state prayer has always struggled up from his heart to the great Being above him, of whose existence and power reason has given him an inkling, yet the prayer of man under Revelation must be something higher and more assured than this blind groping after God,—it must be *a word of man to God, based and built upon a word of God to man.*" (*Dean Goulburn on the "Collects of the Day," vol. i., p. 13.*) .

mark this question well ; for, as we shall presently see, the further question of *prayers for the dead* is involved in its decision.)

In approaching such an inquiry, it will be admitted by all orthodox Christians, (as an abstract principle, at least,) that it is the right and the duty of a Christian man to pray with a reference to *the whole term of his existence*. From this it would follow, that, if man were a mere *mortal* being, like "the beasts that perish," he would need only to pray for a prosperous life, a serenè death, and an undisturbed grave. That would include *all*. Death would be the end of conscious existence ; and therefore any petition for things in a future state would, in *his* case, be an absurdity. But, on the contrary, man is an *immortal* being ; and therefore the prayer of a Christian reaches not only to the hour of his *death*, but speeds onward in an unbroken stream of petition, touching all that lies beyond the grave, and onward still even into the remoteness of eternal ages. We cannot read the Bible without becoming conscious of all this. We cannot read the Prayer-book without seeing how, first of all, it bids us pray that we may have light, peace, and comfort, in the hour of *death* ; and then it goes on, admonishing us to pray continually for another class of things, which, by their very nature, are *beyond* the act of death, *i.e.*, we are taught to offer certain petitions which can only be answered *after the soul has left the body.*

Reducing all this, then, to its simplest terms, we have before us, 1st, the fact that we are offering prayer (of the kind named) for a living man; and 2d, the certainty that our prayer cannot be answered till that man has departed this life, and is an inhabitant of the unseen world. Such prayer is, therefore, really and essentially, *prayer for the dead*. By no other name can it be so well described. For if, in the Church's words, we pray for a certain sick man, that his soul may be received after death "into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour," it is evident that we are contemplating him, in that prayer, not as a *living* but as a *dead* man, i.e., we pray beforehand, for *his departed spirit*; because such a prayer cannot possibly be answered till his soul has left the body, and entered eternity.\* The Prayer-book is full of such petitions,—petitions which we are continually offering for ourselves and others, that certain blessings may be ours *when* our bodies are mouldering in the dust. And as the passing of the river of death is but the *first stage* in the progress of an immortal existence, so, in the Church's prayers we still look *onward* to the day of the resurrection, when "our corruptible bodies shall be changed, and made like unto" our Lord's "own glorious body." We pray for one an-

\* The old formula used by judges at the end of a sentence of execution,—"*and may the Lord have mercy on your soul,*"—is obviously a prayer for the criminal's soul *after* the execution, and is therefore a prayer for the dead.

other, that "from the grave and gate of death, we may pass" into a state of "joy and felicity." We pray thus, *in advance*, for that which perhaps may not take place till long centuries have rolled over our graves. And this is also the scope or wide range of S. Paul's petition in those remarkable words, "I pray God, your whole spirit and soul, and body, be preserved blameless, *unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*,"—a petition covering the whole period between our death and our rising "to the life immortal." Nor do we fail to pray, still further, that the "Good Lord" would "deliver us, in the *day of judgment*," and that we may have "our perfect consummation of bliss in His eternal and everlasting glory." Indeed, so natural is all this, and consistent with the truest piety, that Christians of every sect and denomination, as well as ourselves and the whole Catholic Church, are constantly offering up such *prayers for the dead*,—prayers that when God is "pleased to take us hence," He may "receive us into those heavenly habitations, where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity." In so praying, we simply follow the example of S. Stephen, who, while the Jews were stoning him, uttered the prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,"—a prayer which *could not* be answered until the lips of the martyr were silent in death. And it is not improbable that Stephen had in his mind the dying words of our Blessed Saviour,—words looking beyond

death, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." \*

It may, however, occur to the reader as an objection, that in thus praying for blessings in the future state, our meaning is simply that, by the holiness of our lives we may *become fit for* the enjoyment of those blessings. This may be true, as a general rule; but it is not true, in hundreds of cases continually occurring. At the bed-side of one, dear to us, but with a soul unvisited by repentance for a life of sin and vanity, we watch in almost hopeless fear and distress. There is *no time now* for the discipline of a holy life, no ear or desire for spiritual counsel, or for words of faith and penitence; and yet, even till the last breath of the sufferer, and the last beat of the pulse, there goes forth from our trembling lips the cry, "God be merciful to this dying sinner!" On *which side of the grave* is it supposed that this prayer can be answered?

We now reach the question,—"How does all this apply to prayers for souls *already departed*,—souls perhaps of beloved ones, long ago translated into the Paradise of God?" I answer, that, if the Church and the Bible teach us to pray daily *in advance* for such blessings as we,—now living men,—shall need *after death*, there can be no valid objection to

\* Parts of this paragraph and some lines further on, are transcribed from a letter written by the author to a friend some time ago; the substance of which letter he printed anonymously in a Church paper now extinct.

prayers of a similar kind for the benefit of those who have already departed hence. All such prayers flow naturally from a belief in the soul's immortality, and from the vast field which such a belief throws open for charity and intercommunion between the souls of the dead and the living. If then, both charity and natural affection require us to pray for a man's *future welfare while he is yet living*, it is not very clear why this work of charity and brotherly-kindness should be brought to a sudden termination *as soon as he is taken away* from us. It may be that, while he was here, he was my friend. I bore him in remembrance in many an hour of devotion; and the most fervent of my prayers were for his *soul*, rather than his body. That soul and mine, and millions of other souls, were bound together in the unity of the body of Christ. That bond of unity death had no power to sever. It consigned his body to the tomb, but left unharmed all the freedom and immortal vigor of the living spirit. Between that spirit and mine there is the same close alliance and fellowship which existed when we knelt together at the Church's sacred altar, and there joined "with angels and archangels" in praising God's most holy name. That soul, now in Paradise, believes as I believe, adores Whom I adore, and doubtless prays as I do for a glorious resurrection, and the life of soul and body together in the world to come. As then the death of my friend has not dissolved or impaired that Christian relation which we mutually held be-

fore his decease, no reason can be given why I should now deny to his soul all the benefit that the feeble prayers of a mortal man can offer,—no reason why I should not, on bended knees, and in a Christ-like spirit, ask the Father of all mercies to “give him rest and peace, and let perpetual light shine upon him.”

To say that the souls of the faithful departed *need* no prayers, is more than the wisest of men should dare to affirm. Let it first be proved that death is a purgatorial process, from which the soul emerges in all the splendor and purity of an angelic nature. Let it be proved that every soul entering Paradise is absolutely *perfect*, has nothing to learn, nothing further to desire, and is so replete with gifts as to render prayer a superfluity. And let it also be proved that souls in Paradise are incapable of *progress*, unable to grow in wisdom and knowledge, undesirous to aspire to still loftier regions of celestial virtue, and that the state of the departed is *not* one of preparation for the great day of the Lord, when Death and Hades shall deliver up their inmates to be judged by the Son of Man.\*

\* No one can doubt the antiquity of prayers for the dead, who reads the ancient Liturgies of the Church, and the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers. Numerous quotations may conveniently be found in Bishop Forbes's “Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles,” pp. 314–347. (Oxford and London Ed. 1871.)

See also, II. Maccabees, XII. 43–47, proving that such prayers were in use among the Jews before the Christian era.

Slowly, but surely, the voice of nature, of reason, and of the Church of God, is winning its way in revealing, even to the popular mind, more or less of the glory of the spiritual world. The dread of its sacred emblems, its material symbols, and its shadowings and types in the ever-recurring train of Churchly ceremonial and usage, is passing away with the follies of Puritanical prejudice and the apathy of a sceptical world. Fifty or sixty years ago, the cross was seldom seen, even as an architectural feature, on any other than Anglo-Catholic or Roman churches. It has now triumphed over all objection, and glitters on the spires, towers, and internal ornamentation of even Unitarian houses of worship. In our public cemeteries also, where the Christian eye is still pained with a flaunting display of the old types of heathenism, Egyptian obelisks, Hindoo mausolea, inverted torches, fractured columns, sarcophagi, urns, arrows broken, bows snapped, flameless lamps, and the like, we now find the marble cross, often massive, conspicuous, and richly adorned, together with the sacred monogram, and the touching words which tell that the sepulchre encloses those who have died "in the communion of the Catholic Church"; and on many a tomb we find, at least, those three pregnant and appealing letters, which invite us to pray, "May he (or she,) rest in peace." The progress made by this revival of interest in the departed, as expressed by the use of the cross over their remains, has recently received a very remarkable illus-

tration. In a letter from the Rev. Mr. McKim, a missionary in Japan, is an account of a funeral, which closes with these words:—" You can always tell the graves of Christians in the Japanese cemetery, for they are all *marked with crosses*. Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, Roman and Greek,—*all have the cross for a head-board.*" (*Spirit of Missions*, June, 1886, p. 217.)

The cross on a tomb proclaims the immortality of the soul ; for it symbolizes "the power of God unto salvation." It proclaims also the resurrection of the dead, through the power and merits of Him who died thereon. Believing this, can a Christian heart forbear to pray for a departed friend, as S. Paul prayed for Onesiphorus, "The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day"?

If thoughtful people could only release themselves from the despotism of inherited prejudices, and be guided by their own good sense and natural affection, prayers for the *dead* would soon be as fervently offered as prayers for the *living*. Evidences of this frequently break out, in times of extremity and sorrowful bereavement, even from the lips of many whose Creed would denounce all intercession for the departed as a baleful superstition. There is hope that the day is not far off, when the golden cord of sympathy between "living saints and dead," which Protestantism so ruthlessly snapped asunder, will be reunited, and when earth and Paradise will

again resound with mutual prayers for the bliss of God's elect.\*

\* "There is something very like a prayer for the dead in the record of the raising of the widow's dead child by the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings, xvii. 21, 22. "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, 'O LORD, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.' And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." Dr. Clarke, the Methodist Commentator, remarks that though the Hebrew word (*nephesh*) here used "may sometimes signify *the life*; yet, does not this imply that the spirit must take possession of the body, in order to produce and maintain the flame of animal life?" . . . The words and mode of expression here appear to me a strong proof, not only of the existence of an immortal and immaterial spirit in man, but also that that spirit can and does exist in a separate state from the body." Elijah's prayer, therefore, took effect on the "departed spirit" of the child.

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